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ABSTRACT

This document contains a transcript of a Congressional hearing on children and families in poverty. Testimony was presented by children and parents who described how they cope with or have overcome poverty, and by representatives of community service groups who work closely with poor families in the Washington, DC, metropolitan area. Also included are such documents as a fact sheet on children and families in poverty; an outline of services offered at Friendship House, a Washington, DC-based community program; reprints of three articles ("Helping the Poor Help Themselves," by Robert L. Woodson; "How to Stop the Miseducation of Black Children," by M. Carl Holman; and "The Role of the Family: An Overview," by Glenn C. Loury) and other materials. (KH)

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"CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN POVERTY: BEYOND THE STATISTICS"

HEARING

BEFORE THE

SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

NINETY-NINTH CONGRESS

FIRST SESSION

HEARING HELD IN WASHINGTON, DC
NOVEMBER 6, 1985

Printed for the use of the
Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

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"CHILDREN AND FAMILIES IN POVERTY: BEYOND THE STATISTICS"

WEDNESDAY, NOVEMBER 6, 1985

House of Representatives,
Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families,
Washington, DC.

The committee met, pursuant to notice, at 9:38 a.m., at Friendship House, 619 D Street, SE., Hon. George Miller presiding.

Members present: Representatives Miller, Boggs, Boxer, Fish, Johnson, Wheat, Levin, and Dellums.

Staff present: Alan J. Stone, staff director and counsel; Ann Rosewater, deputy staff director; Judy Weiss, professional staff; Anthony Jackson, professional staff; Mark Souder, minority staff director; and Joan Godley, committee clerk.

Chairman Miller. The Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families will come to order.

The purpose of this hearing, unfortunately, is to once again visit the issue of children and families in poverty. At the very first hearing of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families 2½ years ago, one of the Nation's leading social scientists told the committee that perhaps the single most important fact about American families and children is that poverty is increasing, holding in its grip families who have been poor some time and adding new families each year, many never having dreamt that this might be their lot.

Today, more than 30 hearings and several major studies later, many of us have come to the same tragic conclusion. We have 13 million impoverished children in America, 3 million more than in 1979; more than 50 percent of black children and nearly 25 percent of all children now live in poverty.

In 1981 we were told that there was a safety net that would protect the poor from the effects of massive program cuts. In fact, millions have fallen through the safety net, and in addition, taxes on low-income families have gone up 300 percent. Recession has taken jobs and thousands of dollars from their wallets, and billions have been cut from programs designed to help these families.

In short, we have greatly increased the vulnerability of those who already are most vulnerable—children—while making it much more difficult for their families to provide for them. This is a design for disaster, and the victims of our failure will be with us for decades to come.

We have come to Friendship House today to listen to the children and the families involved in the struggle to survive poverty.

That struggle is a matter of day-to-day survival for millions of Americans. In 1980 the poverty rate for children in the District of Columbia was higher than any State except Mississippi. We know that more than one third of the teens are unemployed and that 93 percent of all the births are to unmarried teens.

Today we hope to go beyond the statistics. We are going to listen today to the real poverty experts, the people who have been enduring it, and we will hear what it is like to live in inadequate housing without heat or food or money or doctor or carfare.

Sadly, the stories we hear today are not unique. They reflect a nationwide trend which portends more poverty, more ill health, and more social dependence.

As always, this committee is interested in learning how children and families have successfully struggled out of poverty, what they have done differently, who has helped them along the way. We will hear from those who work closely with the families throughout the metropolitan area, about the kinds of assistance and services that are most effective and most needed.

We hope to gain a deeper understanding of poverty, and to illustrate the importance of elected officials and caring citizens working to end poverty for children and families. It is as true today as it was 20 years ago when this Nation set upon that course.

The select committee has constantly tried to keep the issue of poor families on its agenda, to focus on children in poverty and their problems. But I would like to note that the hearing today was really at the insistence of Congressman Ron Dellums, who came to me on the floor of the House several weeks ago and related to me several devastating situations that had been brought to his attention. He asked if the select committee could spend some time to once again focus our energies and our attention on this problem, which clearly goes beyond the District of Columbia. We also thought it was very important for policymakers to understand that right here in the shadow of our Nation's Capitol, we have families that live in a desperate situation on a day-to-day basis.

I would like at this time to recognize any members of the committee who might have an opening statement that they would like to make. First of all, Mrs. Lindy Boggs from Louisiana.

[Opening statement of Chairman George Miller follows:]

OPENING STATEMENT OF HON. GEORGE MILLER, A REPRESENTATIVE IN CONGRESS FROM THE STATE OF CALIFORNIA, AND CHAIRMAN, SELECT COMMITTEE ON CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

At the first hearing of the Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families two and one-half years ago, one of the nation's leading social scientists told the Committee:

"Perhaps the single most important fact about American families and children is that poverty is increasing, holding in its grip families who have been poor for some time, and adding new families each year, many never having dreamt that this might be their lot."

Today, more than 30 hearings and several major studies later, many of us have come to the same tragic conclusion.

We have 13 million impoverished children in America, three million more than in 1979. More than 50 percent of black children, and nearly 25 percent of all children, now live in poverty.

In 1981 we were told that a "safety net" would protect the poor from the effects of massive program cuts. In fact, millions have fallen through that safety net. In addition, taxes on low-income families have gone up 300%, recession has taken jobs and thousands of dollars from their wallets, and billions have been cut from programs designed to help these families without regard to their basic needs.

In short, we have greatly increased the vulnerability of those who are already most vulnerable—children—while making it much more difficult for their families to provide for them.

This is a design for disaster. And the victims of our failure will be with us for decades to come.

We've come to Friendship House today to listen to children and families involved in a struggle to survive poverty. That struggle is a matter of day-to-day survival for millions.

In 1980, the poverty rate for children in the District of Columbia was higher than any state, except Mississippi. We know that more than one-third of the teens here are unemployed, and that 93% of all teen births are to unmarried teens.

Today we hope to go beyond the statistics. We're going to listen today to the real poverty experts, the people who have been enduring it. We will hear what it is like to live in inadequate housing, without heat, or food, or money for a doctor, or carfare.

Sadly, the stories we will hear today are not unique. They reflect a nationwide trend which portends more poverty, poor health, and social dependence.

As always, this Committee is interested in learning how children and families have successfully struggled out of poverty. What have they done differently? What helped them along the way? We will hear from those who work closely with families throughout the metropolitan area about what kinds of assistance and services are most effective.

We hope to gain from this hearing a deeper understanding of the realities of poverty. But understanding poverty better means nothing if we do not also understand that we, as elected officials and as caring citizens, have a responsibility to end poverty for children and families. That is as true today as it was 20 years ago.

Children and Families in Poverty: A Fact Sheet

CHILDHOOD POVERTY REMAINS HIGH

In 1984, 12.9 million, or 21 percent, of all children in America, were poor. 8.1 million of those children were white, 4.3 million were black and 2.3 million were Hispanic children (white and non-white). 6.7 million (52 percent) of these impoverished children were in female-headed, single-parent households. (Census Bureau, 1985)

The poverty rate for children under 6 was 23.4 percent in 1984. For black children under 6, the poverty rate was 51.1 percent, the highest rate recorded for this group since the Census Bureau began collecting these data in 1970. (Census Bureau, 1985)

The number of poor children increased by nearly 3.5 million between 1979 and 1983, and fell by 520,000 between 1983 and 1984. The decline between 1983 and 1984 was entirely among white children, although the poverty rate for white children, 16.1 percent, remains over 40 percent higher than in 1979. Poverty rates for black children remained at 46.2 percent between 1983 and 1984, and rose from 37.7 to 38.7 percent for Hispanic children. (Census Bureau, 1985)

The increase in poverty among children since 1979 included over 2 million children in male-headed families. During that period, poverty rates in male-headed families climbed faster than in female-headed families. (Census Bureau, 1985)

Between 1959 and 1969, the child poverty rate was cut in half, to a record low of 13.8 percent. By 1984, the child poverty rate had risen 50 percent above its 1969 low. (Census Bureau, 1985)

POVERTY HIGHEST IN FEMALE-HEADED AND MINORITY FAMILIES

A child in a female-headed family is four times as likely to be poor as one in a male-present family. A black child is three times as likely to be poor as a white child. (Children in Poverty, Committee on Ways and Means, 1985)

Forty-five percent of all poor white children, and 75 percent of all poor black children, live in female-headed, single-parent families. By 1990, 3 million more children under 10 will live in single-parent households, (totalling 38.8 million, a 48 percent increase in this decade) raising the percentage of children in such households to 23 percent. (Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families, 1983 and Children in Poverty, 1985)

Overall, 4.8 percent of children are "persistently" poor (poor 10 years or more during a 15 year period). However, nearly 30 percent of black children are persistently poor. Of all persistently poor children, almost 90 percent are black. (Children in Poverty, 1985)

WORKING POOR FAMILIES TRY TO ESCAPE POVERTY

Nearly 40 percent of families receiving AFDC in 1982 reported earnings from income during that year. (Beyond The Myths, Center on Social Welfare Policy and Law, 1985)

More than one-sixth of poor children in 1983, 2.5 million, were in families with at least one full-time, year-round worker. (Children in Poverty, 1985)

One-fourth of children in married-couple families would be poor if their only income were their father's earnings. If the mother's earnings are also counted, the poverty rate for children in married-couple families is reduced to 17.2 percent, a 30 percent reduction. (Children in Poverty, 1985)

HIGHER TAXES AND EROSION OF INCOME SUPPORTS LEAVE CHILDREN MORE DEEPLY IN POVERTY

In 1978, a family of four at the poverty line paid $403 in payroll taxes and received $134 in refundable Earned Income Tax credits for a total federal tax burden of $269. In 1984, a similar low-income family paid $711 in payroll taxes and $365 in income taxes for a total Federal tax burden of $1,076, an increase of 300 percent. (Joint Committee on Taxation, 1984)

Between 1973 and 1983, the number of children in poverty increased by over 40 percent. During that time, aggregate government income supports to impoverished children, including AFDC and Social Security benefits, declined in real terms. The combined effect of declining real value of benefits, and increasing numbers of poor children, means the average amount of support going to each child fell significantly. (Children in Poverty, 1985)

The average number of poor children receiving AFDC benefits declined from 83.6 per 100 children in 1973 to 53.3 per 100 in 1983 because state income eligibility standards have not kept pace with inflation. (Children in Poverty, 1985)

In 1984, the combined benefit from food stamps and AFDC was below the poverty level in every state except Alaska, and below 75 percent of the poverty level in almost four-fifths of the states. 50.3 percent of all Food Stamp recipients are children. (Committee on Ways and means, 1985 and U.S. Department of Agriculture, 1982)

Of the nearly 1 million women below the poverty level who were due child support payments in 1983, only 62 percent received any amount of payment. The average annual payment received was $1,430, about 60 percent of the average payment received by all women. The average total income of an impoverished mother with 3 children who received child support payments in 1983 was $5,423. (Census Bureau, 1985)

POVERTY AND NEED IN THE NATION'S CAPITAL

The poverty rate for children in Washington, DC, 26 percent was higher than the child poverty rate for any of the 50 states except Mississippi. (Census Bureau, 1980)

In 1984, the infant mortality rate in Washington, DC as 20.6 per 100 live births, nearly twice the national average of 10.6 per 100 live births. (National Center for Health Statistics, 1985)

In 1984, 93 percent of all teenage girls who gave birth in Washington were unmarried. (Washington, DC Dept. of Human Services, 1985)

The average annual unemployment rate in 1984 for all teenagers in Washington, DC was 36.5 percent; for black teenagers, it was 40.5 percent. (Bureau of Labor Statistics, 1985)

Mrs. BOGGS. Thank you so much, Mr. Chairman.

And thank you very much for holding this hearing, and Mr. Dellums, for insisting upon it. Thank you for coming to this place, because you have really come to the source when you have come to Friendship House. It was the first settlement house in Washington. It is here in the shadow of the dome of the Capitol. It has served in varying degrees, according to the circumstances of its neighbors, for many, many years.

I had the privilege of serving here in what was called the Congressional Circle for Friendship House with a group of other wives for many years; and then when the evidence was pouring into the house and its services that somehow we needed to change the focus of the services here, Barbara Bolling of Missouri and I were the Chairs that year of the fundraiser. We decided we had to have a big fundraiser in order to raise money for a survey.

So we had a jazz festival, and Mr. Wheat, you will be interested to know that we had, of course, great jazz bands from Missouri, from Kansas City and from St. Louis, from New Orleans, from San Francisco, from Chicago, from New York, and we even had a jazz pianist from Japan. And we raised sufficient funds in order to conduct a survey of the neighborhood. Just as the board felt it would, it showed that we needed to change the focus of the services here at Friendship House.

That survey became the model that was used 20 years ago, Mr. Chairman, when the War on Poverty Programs were put into place for neighborhood surveys.

And so I am very, very pleased and honored that you have come to Friendship House to hold this most important hearing for the children, the youth, and the families, not only of our Nation's capital, but for our whole Nation.

And I thank you very, very much for the opportunity of saying so.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

Mrs. Boxer.

Mrs. **Boxer**. Thank you, Mr. Chairman.

Very briefly, I want to thank my colleague from California, Mr. Dellums, and you for responding to this overwhelming need that we have in the Congress to take a look at what is really happening on the ground.

We hear the statistics, and sometimes we become immune to them and we do not really get behind them. And that is what this will do for us today.

And as a mother, as someone who, when I see a child, I just light up, the thought of children being in poverty, one out of every two black children, one out of every four Hispanic children, one out of every six white children, in poverty, it is a shame on our country. And I think that with your leadership, maybe we can begin to attack the problem.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

Mr. Wheat.

Mr. **Wheat**. Even more briefly, Mr. Chairman, let me thank Mr. Dellums for prodding our chairman to hold this hearing, and thank you, Mr. Chairman, for needing no prodding to have this hearing and for keeping a host of issues regarding the status of children on the forefront of the collective consciousness of this country.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

And as is obvious, we are joined today by Congressman Ron Dellums, who is also the Chairman of the District of Columbia Committee.

Ron, do you have a statement?

Mr. **Dellums**. Yes. Thank you very much, Mr. Chairman.

Very briefly, I would like to thank you and the members of the panel for going forward with these field hearings, and I would like to join you in challenging our colleagues in the Congress on both sides of the aisle to eradicate poverty.

And finally, simply say that I believe that a society that threatens its children is a society on its way to dying. And poverty and disease and hunger threaten our children, and it is terribly important that we fight back.

And I was just saying a moment ago to the witness to my immediate left, when she said, will this help; and I said, we have to go down struggling and battling and we have to politicize it. So you have to raise your voice as loudly, as powerfully, as you can in the name, in defense of our children.

And I appreciate it very much, and thank you very much for the opportunity to speak very briefly. I would like to hear from the witnesses, Mr. Chairman.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

And I would like to thank Friendship House for providing this facility and being so very helpful to the committee in setting up this hearing.

They have been a tremendous resource for this neighborhood and for this city.

Our first panel will be made up of parents and individuals who will give us direct testimony about their particular situation here in the District of Columbia and the surrounding areas.

And our first witness will be Tweedy Williams.

And I would like to acknowledge that we have been joined by Nancy Johnson, our colleague from Connecticut.

Tweedy?

STATEMENT OF TWEEDY WILLIAMS, PARENT, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. **Williams**. Hello. My name is Tweedy Williams.

And I would like to take this time to tell you a little bit about myself. I spent most of my adolescent life in the small town of Lawrence, MA. My mother was——

[Ms. Williams' child crying.]

Mrs. **Boxer**. Can I take the baby, if I go and stand on the other side of the room?

Ms. **Williams**. Forgive the interruption.

To start with, my mother was on welfare when I was a child, and I really hated it. It was very, very—how can I say—difficult knowing that if a check did not come, you would more than likely lose your apartment, you would not be able to eat, there would be no food; and if the check was going to be late that month, you had a choice of either being stifflipped about it and sticking it out or swallowing your pride and going to your friends and asking for help and for food and for money, which really is—it has happened a few times.

And to see your mother's face when she comes into the door, knowing that she had just gone to a friend literally begging for money, is not a very pleasant sight to see.

My mother passed away recently—well, I say recently. Actually, it was about 3 years ago. And we have been living down in the Washington-Virginia-Maryland area for about 5 years.

About myself, I, as of last week, was living in a shelter, which I am very grateful for, because it kept myself and my son off the streets. Now I am sharing an apartment with a friend of mine who also was in the shelter, but she was lucky enough to get out, and she needed a roommate, so I was lucky enough to be at the right place at the right time.

During the time I was in the shelter, I was working two jobs. One was in Langley Park; the other one was down in Bethesda. By the way, the shelter was in Bethesda.

The job in Bethesda was easy to get to because it was right down the street, but the job in Langley Park was quite difficult to get to. I had to take several buses and transfer quite a few times to get to work. So eventually I lost that job because of my transportation problem and being there late so often.

Luckily, I was able to keep the job in Bethesda, which I still have now. The problem being with that job is that the building is going to close down. So since that building is going to close down, the job is going to be gone. But through the grace of God, I have another job starting the day after that job ends. So I am very grateful for that.

To be straight about it, I right now am on welfare. I get a partial check because I am working. I hope soon, with the other job that I am getting, I will not have to have welfare. I am grateful for it, because it did keep clothes on my son and myself. It kept us fed. It paid our rent. It met our basic needs.

But I do not want my son growing up with just his basic needs met. I want to be able to say, all right, I have a week off of work; let us go to Disney World, you know, or something of that nature. But I know that at this time it is far in the future for me.

The jobs that I am working right now—well, they are not my first jobs that I have ever had. I have been working since I was—actually, legal jobs—14, but—well, I will say—I will not say nonlegal—I will say jobs that I should not have been working because of my age, I have been working since I was about 12. So due to the situation that my mother was in, I had to drop out of high school and help her, help us, I should say.

So it was kind of a tossup. I did want to complete school, but I could not. So I more or less just had to depend on myself and my mother to help us get by.

The job I am working now, it costs me about $4.80 to get to and from work a day, and I make $4 an hour. So that is still pretty good. The job I am going to be getting is paying more money, which is good, but I still have to pay the $4.80 to get to and from work because it is still in Bethesda.

And as I said, I have a 1-year-old son, which you have all seen, and I would just like to have his life to be a lot better than mine. I do not want him to have to depend on somebody else's generosity. I want him to know that I can take care of him, and when he grows up, I hope that he will be able to—that I will be able to instill some of that in him, so when he has a family he will be able to take care of them, and so on, and so on.

And really, that is about all I have to say. I thank you very much for your time and your patience.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you very much.

Aletha?

Can we move the mikes over?

[Prepared statement of Tweedy Williams follows:]

Prepared Statement of Tweedy Williams

Hello, my name is Tweedy Williams, and I would like to take this time to tell you a little about myself.

To start, my mother was on welfare when I was a child and I hated it. Waiting for the check to come for the rent, food and clothes—just the basic things you need to stay alive. It all hinged on if the check did not come, would you have food, or would you have to swallow your pride again and ask your friends for some help. It really stunk.

I was living in a shelter in Bethesda just last week, and by the grace of God and help from a few friends, I moved out last weekend to an apartment in Southeast. I had been in the shelter for about 2 months. During that time I was working 2 jobs.

To my dismay, I had to quit one of my jobs because of transportation problems. Now I just work at the sub shop. Where I'm living now is farther away from my job, but I have more incentive to get up in the morning.

Don't get me wrong, these are not the first jobs I have had. I've been working ever since I was fourteen years old. I've done everything from babysitting, to packing fruit, to phone soliciting—anything as long as it was legal.

Now I have to get up at 5 a.m. to get to work in Bethesda on time. The round trip costs me $4.80, and I only make $4 an hour. The store I'm working at is about to close down permanently, but I've been blessed by God once again. I got a job that pays more money and it starts the day after my present job ends.

It will still cost me $4.80 to get to and from work, but I am grateful that I have a job to go to every morning.

I have a one-year-old son and I don't want him to live the kind of life I had. I want his home to be filled with the things he needs and wants, and I pray I can give them to him.

Thank you for your time and patience.

STATEMENT OF ALETHA HARRIS, PARENT, MARYLAND

Ms. **Harris**. Good morning. My name is Aletha Harris, and I am a resident of Montgomery County, MD.

I am fully employed by the National Institute of Health as a computer assistant.

I come from a family of eight children. My father was a brick contractor, and my mother was a housewife. All my life, you know, she did not go to work because he, you know, adequately provided for the family.

As I grew older, you know, she decided that, when she no longer had babies at home, so she decided on her own, not because she had to, she went out to work. And I assumed that that was the way that a home should be, the father and mother working together to raise the children.

However, at the age of 17, I gave birth to a daughter, which is now 15 years old. My mother and father discouraged me from getting married because at that age my father told me I did not have enough experience to just go out in the world. I was still a child.

So I just took his advice and tried to make the best of what I, you know, did. At the age of 22, thinking that I was capable of going out on my own, I married a disabled veteran. In this marriage I suffered total hardship. Six months after the marriage, my husband caught an eye of another woman, and that is where the tragedy had begun. He continued abandoning me until I just decided I was just going to move out where he could never find me. And to this day he has never been able to relocate me.

Life with him was like living in a reformatory. He never paid the rent, he never provided food for us. He did not care about us, and he despised my daughter I had out of wedlock. He did not want to be bothered with her at no time. He even showed it, and on one occasion I remember him sending her to school with her shoes with safety pins in them because he was so busy providing for this other person that he did not even take the time to provide for me and the child.

We had two children from the marriage which were victims of eviction from apartment to apartment until I could find work to take on the responsibility of the family. Before that happened, I was on welfare. The Salvation Army just took me in until I could find a one-bedroom apartment.

I did go on welfare, however, because I did not have any skills, and I had a small baby at home. And they gave me a check for $282 a month. With that I had to pay $199 a month rent, $77 for food stamps, and it left me with $6 to last me for 30 days. I had not enough money to buy soap or wash my clothing or for anything. If I wanted to go out to go somewhere or if my child needed diapers, after that $6 to buy enough diapers to last me 15 days, I had no way of getting them. As a matter of fact, what I had to do, I had about 10 cloth diapers. I would wash them all day long for the next 30 days to make sure I had enough for the children to go about, you know, keeping the baby dry. I stayed home most of the time because I had nothing to wear. I only had one pair of pants; I wore them so much that the neighbors even talked about me not coming out anymore.

My husband was so desperate to destroy me, he got upset that I was trying to make it on my own, so he would come to the apartment to harass me. And on one occasion he came to the apartment—because I would never open the door—he was a karate expert, and he always would come with his nunchucks and bang on the door and kick the door, and this went on for hours and hours night after night.

And one night, on one occasion, my oldest daughter, who was born out of wedlock, her father would always come see her periodically. And because I did not associate with my neighbors, they did not know who he was. And someone told him that somebody was coming in the house, and he decided he would come to the house and see, you know, see who this person was.

And to make a long story short, I had to run for my life to the police department one night, which was about a couple blocks down the street, because he was after me constantly. He would just come in; he would, if you do not talk, then he would light fire on paper and just throw it across the bed with the children. He was just pure torture.

And later on, after getting another apartment I had to sleep with my children on furniture from trash. I knew a few people when I moved into Maryland, and they saw fit that I would have an adequate place to, you know, have furniture. And my husband never provided any furniture or anything for the family. And this was a real tragedy to me, because I had never been in a situation like this, leaving home. And people came by and they would go out and collect things that were laying around on the street.

And if you go to Montgomery County, people always are throwing away something that someone else can use. And he would go, this particular person—I did not know him that well—would go around and he would collect furniture. So he filled up this apartment that I lived in to provide.

So I slept on the sofa; it was very dirty. And my children slept on the floor. And this went on until I moved over in Montgomery County where I am currently living.

When I got up to Montgomery County, I had no transportation. I moved over in Germantown. The buses were not running; it is very country. Nobody is concerned about—your neighbors are not concerned about you walking. I had to walk at least 2 miles to the store to get food. I did not have a car because I could not afford to buy a car. And what I had to do, I had to take on a part-time job to take care of my children. As a matter of fact, right after I got off welfare, I worked 2 full-time jobs, going 16 hours a day to provide for my family.

My children spent the night at home with one of my neighbors watching over them periodically from time to time, and I had to pay a small fee. Some nights I had to catch a cab to work; it was so far out of reach that I could not make it on my own. Recently I held a part-time job and the money that I was making on my part-time job was being taken away from me by my landlord because it's subsidized housing. When I pay my rent every month, he would take so much of it. For instance, if you pay $100 a month rent, and you go out here and work and make $75, well, he takes $70 and leaves you with $5. So you are really not getting any bills paid working part-time.

So as a result, I recently quit my part-time job, but I did wind up buying a car. The car is more than I can handle. The car note is $200 a month more than I can afford to pay, but I have to go at least 25 miles to work every morning; before I go to work, I must take my child to a private school. And the reason why she can go to private school is because of the church that I attend is in a very well-off neighborhood and the people there are not just the average poverty-stricken people. They are well off, and they pay her tuition for her to come to the school, which is a blessing to me.

I have to leave my son home in the morning by himself for over at least 2 hours, and I leave the house about 6:30 and he is home by himself. Someone has to see to it that he gets on the bus and that someone is nobody. I leave him there, and he is only 9. He gets on the bus about 8:30, and I drive my other one to a babysitter. Then I go to work.

I do not have enough money every payday to make my ends meet. My utility bill is so high, it is much higher than the rent at the home that I pay for. And I have suffered lack of electricity. I went on for almost 2 weeks, almost, without electricity. I could not afford to turn it on, and with the grace of God, someone gave me the money to put it back on.

It is not easy trying to pay a water bill which I get in every 3 months. It is a struggle, because the water bill fluctuates from time to time, and it really is a struggle, you know, for me to live out there. But I determined by my children that I am going to do what I have to do. I cannot go back home. I have gotten older now, so I must continue to struggle and fight.

And I started attending this church in 1983, and the people who were there, when they came to my house, they realized I did not have any furniture in my home. They furnished my whole house. Not only that, they introduced me to a woman, Ms. Ruth Langley, who is owner of a business called PROP, Inc.—Pooling Resources of People, a nonprofit social service delivery system. She provides for me food, clothing, she helps me with money if she can. She provides me with any resources that she knows of that is within Montgomery County. She has also introduced me to what is called Manna Food Program, which is a program that helps people who cannot buy food on an everyday basis. Because by the time I pay my rent and pay my utility bills, I do not have any money left to buy my food. OK.

Since 1975, when I left home, this is the first time I have ever eaten a well-balanced meal, because of Ms. Langley and my church's generosity, to help me.

I applied for assistance from the Red Cross to support me sometimes, with no success. I filed for a divorce from my husband. He ran into hiding because he does not want a divorce. He receives a pension for $1,400 a month, and I have gone to the VA time and time again to fight with them to obtain this money to provide for my children. And they give me the same excuse: if it causes any hardship on him, we are not going to do anything about it.

I have paid attorneys to help me; it has not done any good. I have hired people to go out to look for him; it has cost me money. And therefore, as a result, I applied for social service to help keep my rent paid. I applied for county energy assistance to help pay my utility bills. My church helps me during hardship.

And recently I had a problem with my car when it broke down. And as a matter of fact, my church paid the repair of that car so I can continue to go to work. During the time my car broke down I had to walk a mile before daybreak to get to a ride-on bus that they just provided by the county. It has taken me 10 years to obtain child support for my 15-year-old, 5 years to obtain public housing for my children to stay in. I had no idea that all this was going to happen to me and my children.

For me to get support for my children cost me legal fees, five evictions, and I still do not have that support. And meanwhile I am still living and struggling every day to make it on my own.

And I thank you for your listening, and words.

[Prepared statement of Aletha Harris follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ALETHA M. HARRIS, PARENT, MONTGOMERY COUNTY, MD

My name is Aletha M. Harris. I live in Montgomery County, Maryland. I am a computer assistant at the National Institutes of Health.

I come from a family of eight children. My father was a brick contractor. My mother was a housewife, but is now a head cook for the D.C. Public Schools. Our family never lacked food, clothing or shelter. My dad taught me to go out and work to earn a living.

At the age of 17, I gave birth to a child who is now 15 years old. My mother and dad discouraged me from getting married due to my age and insisted I finish school and go to work.

At the age of 22 I married a disabled veteran, thinking that I was old enough to be out on my own. In this marriage I suffered total hardship. Six months after we were married, another woman caught the eye of my husband. He continually abandoned me for her until I finally moved away to prevent him from coming back.

Life with him was like living in a reformatory. He hardly paid the rent or bought food or clothing for our family. He despised my young children and would never make us a full part of his life. I remember on one occasion when my daughter had to go to school with a safety pin holding her shoes together because he was too busy providing for his girlfriend.

We had two children from the marriage and were victims of eviction from apartment to apartment until I could find work so I could take on the responsibility of the family. But before that happened, I was on welfare. The Salvation Army provided us a place to sleep until I found a one-bedroom apartment.

The welfare check was $282. I paid $199 rent, $77 for food stamps, and then had $6 left to last for 30 days. I had no money to buy enough soap to wash clothes, buy clothing, or anything else.

My husband was desperate to destroy me. He got upset that I was trying to make it on my own, so he would come by my apartment and harass me. One cold night I had to run, only partially dressed, to the police station to get away from him. My children and I spent the night in a shelter for abused spouses. I constantly had to call the police to keep him away. I had to sleep with my children on furniture from trash cans and rely on my relatives to come to my aid to help keep my family together.

Later, after getting off welfare, I took on two jobs working sixteen hours a day to provide for my children. In 1982, I finally found a house through a Public Housing program, which is the house I live in today. I had been on the housing list for five years.

But the house was located where there was no public transportation, and I had no car. When I first moved into my house I spent almost two weeks at home because I had no one to care for my baby. I had to walk two miles to the store to get food for my family and many times walk one mile to drop my child at the home of a day care mother. My older daughter and I would take turns walking in 30-degree and below weather to pick up my younger daughter.

Although my rent is subsidized, I still have to pay high electric and water bills. Sometimes the electric bill is as much as the rent. During the winter my electric bill averages $270 per month, and my rent constantly changes due to changes in salary. I took on a parttime job to help pay for the car I had to buy, and the Housing Authority raised my rent to the point where most of the money from my parttime job went toward the rent.

The car note has never been paid on time; my electricity has been off twice, which meant no hot water, and I had no way of ironing my clothes except to start a small fire in a grill in the house. For a while I had no curtains in my two-story house and could not afford to buy any.

In 1983, I started attending a church in the area, and people there through generousity furnished my house. They called on Mrs. Ruth Langley of PROP, Inc., for assistance. PROP is a small organization that helps people in need. Mrs. Langley has provided food, clothing, and money for my family, and through her organization I have been able to eat a well-balanced meal for the first time since 1975 when I left home. I also have received food for my family from Manna, another nonprofit organization.

I applied for assistance from the Red Cross to help obtain child support from my husband several times with no success. I have filed for divorce but have not been able to have the papers served because I do not know where he is living. He receives a pension of about $1,400 per month, yet no contributions are being made to us and will not be made until I am able to pinpoint his location and have the legal papers served.

I have applied for help from the Department of Social Services to help keep the rent paid, and to the county energy assistance program to pay my electric bill. I also receive funds from my church to help during times of hardship. Recently my car broke down. I have had to walk a mile before daylight to get to the new Ride-on transportation provided by the county.

It took me 10 years to obtain child support for my 15 year old and 5 years to obtain public housing. I have no idea how many more years it will be before I obtain support for my other two children. For me to get support for my children costs legal fees and has cost me 5 evictions, but I still don't have that support. Meanwhile, every day is a struggle as I fight for the welfare of my family.

Chairman MILLER. Thank you very much.

Michael.

We need to pass the large microphone down to Michael. There you go.

STATEMENT OF MICHAEL JACOBS, AGE 17, OXON HILL, MD

Mr. JACOBS. Thank you.

My name is Michael Jacobs. I am 17 years of age. I was born in DC. I was born on April 10, 1968.

I have four sisters and three brothers. My brothers are 21, 19, and 23 years of age. My 19-year-old brother is in Job Corps. He has completed retail sales, laying tile, warehousing, and is now taking up clerical.

My 23-year-old brother lives in Virginia and was just released from out of prison. He was convicted of armed robbery. He served 3 years in jail, but is now trying to get his life together and not make any more mistakes. He has received his GED while in jail.

My 21-year-old brother is an auto mechanic and is married and has 3 children.

My sister is 25 years of age, has 2 boys, and lives at home. She goes to Martha Washington Career Center and is taking up dental technician.

My youngest sister is 14 years of age and attends Shaw Junior High School.

My 16-year-old sister is attending Dunbar Senior High School. I have a 20-year-old sister who is now down in Chesapeake, WV, Job Corps Center, who is now taking up accounting.

I attended Shaw Junior High School and graduated in 1982. Later I attended Coolidge High School, but dropped out because I was hanging around with the wrong crowd and smoking drugs, and skipping classes. I also believed I was going to fail.

I attended Job Corps from August 1984 to April 1985. I left Job Corps because I was involved in too many fights. I was accused of hitting the RA with a chair, but I did not. Even though I was innocent, my records have built up, and I had a bad reputation.

I felt truly happy to leave Job Corps because I wanted to go back to high school. But I learned about CYS, Center for Youth Services. I liked what CYS was doing for young kids and decided to stay here.

As far as my growing up, we were raised to deal with what we had. We were on public assistance when I was between the age of 6 and 7. When I was young, I had all the money I wanted to by dealing with drugs in order to get things. I first started using drugs when I was in the ninth grade. I was smoking marijuana.

When I entered high school, I wanted something stronger, so I started smoking PCP. I stopped using drugs Thanksgiving of 1984 because I did not like what I was doing to my body. There are better opportunities for me other than getting high. I decided to go for it and try to be successful.

Success means to me having what I want, a decent job. It means to settle down with a family, a career, and a college degree. When I was a kid, I was raised by my mother. Later my mother met a man, Lonnie Stewart. We have all been together for about 12 or 13 years. He has shown me what life is all about.

He has told me education is more important than sitting out on the corner selling drugs. He said that selling drugs is a very—he say to me, it was a very dangerous situation, because by selling drugs, I was killing other people's bodies.

Lonnie told me that a man is someone who can budget their money, take care of family, and live day by day by having food and clothes on your back. He told me I ought to stay out of trouble and told me a mind was a terrible thing to waste.

I do not want to give up my freedom. It would be time wasted. My parents have supported me ever since I have been at CYS, and I am very happy that I made a decision to enter college. I never knew how much education can help.

Survival means not worrying about what someone else has, but worrying about what you have, and be thankful for what you have got.

When I was growing up, I did not really know what poor or rich meant, because I was between the ages of 6 and 7. I never questioned anyone about what was public assistance or what does it do for people. We basically, we got by, not saying, like, if I see somebody with a brandnew pair of Adidas on, if I had some raggedy-down tennis shoes, I would not say, I wish I had that. I would not pay it no mind. I would just live day by day. If money came in, tomorrow my father would buy it for me.

We really did not run next to our neighbors asking them, like, can we have a loaf of bread or some bacon or some eggs to eat. They always had some way of getting food around for us.

We later moved on, moved up in Montgomery County—Prince Georges County, we moved up to Prince Georges County, and we have been living there for about 12 years.

I say, during the 12 years, when we first moved out there, me and my brother, we really did not like it, because we did not like the environment. It was, like, too quiet around there, because we was raised like up on Douglas Road. We was, like, scared to take out the trash, because people harass us or hit us or something.

But later on Lonnie taught us how to fight back, and so we all got together and took the trash out together, and started fighting back. And later on, everybody was saying, it is my turn to take out the trash. Everybody was fighting, who is going to take out the trash, because we learned how to fight.

So he really taught me, you know, what survival was, and do not depend on nobody else but yourself. Because he was saying that not really, if you are in a bad situation, someone is really going to help you. Only somebody going to help you if you try to help yourself, because you cannot just run on the street, walking around thinking that the world owes you something, because the world do not owe you nothing. You have to get an education in order to be something.

Education is more valuable because if you do not get education, next step is crime. And I am sure no one wants crime. If you are involved in crime, you might have to give up your freedom for a certain amount of time. And I sure enough know I do not want that.

But as time went on, we was, while we was living out in Maryland, we got to know the place, but when we moved around, it seemed like everybody was, like, who are these D.C. bad'uns, where, who do they think they are, who give them the right they can move over here?

We never did pay no mind, though. But as times went on, it seemed like we fought about everybody around the neighborhood. I do not know why, but it just seemed like everybody has a guilty conscience on his shoulder that they had to get something off.

Basically, we, you know, put it to rest, show them what we can do. Now, we get the utmost respect around the place now. Everybody knocks on the door asking if we are coming out. If we do not come out, they want to know why we did not come out. You know, it is like most of my friends live around there, some of them, like, they smoke drugs or they skip classes or think that that is going to get by. But that is not going to do it.

You are going to have to go out there and get that education in order to be something. They be talking about, let us go to a gogo and all this. I have not went to a gogo in about, I would say about 8 or 10 years. And I am not trying to go to no more, because there is too much violence in the gogos, people jumping up and down screaming. You step on somebody's shoe, they want to steal you or do something like that. That is not it.

Or some people think that if they do not have no education, they have to put a weapon in their hands, and they can accomplish anything. Accomplishing with a gun or a weapon, that is not going to get it. Sooner or later you are going to have to give up some of that time, because shooting someone is—I am going to say I do not like really talking about it because it is like taking someone else's freedom.

I do not want nobody taking my freedom, because I have a lot to live for. And I know where I want to go, I have a vision of being an electrical engineer; hopefully next August I will be entering Maryland University. I am planning on going to college for 12 years, because now I like school.

Education means—it just means a lot to me now, because I never did like the school. I used to skip classes and smoke drugs and all that. But now I love school. I cannot get away from it. It seems like, when I come to school, I ask my teacher, Ms. Eileen, if she will give me more work, because it does not seem like it is enough for me. I just want more and more, you know. It just seems, once you get to reading, it seems like, like if you are reading a book like of 550 pages, it seems like most average black kids would say, no, I am not going to read all this.

But once you get to reading and you realize how far you done got, you know that you done accomplished something. But now there is times, you know, I feel, though, that I want to be the best of my field. I do not want to go around, you know, somebody telling me, Mike, fix this electrical circuit, fix this or that. I want to be the man. I want to go around and tell them what to do. I am tired of people telling me what to do.

So I think it is about time for me to move on.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Michael Jacobs follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF MICHAEL E. JACOBS

My name is Michael Jacobs. I am 17 years of age. I was born on April 10, 1968. I have lived in the District for 17 years and have four sisters and three brothers. My brothers are 21, 19, and 23. None of them live at home. The 19-year-old brother is in Job Corps (retail sales, laying tile, warehousing and clerical). The 23-year-old lives in Virginia, and is just out of prison (convicted of armed robbery). He served 3 years in jail, but is now trying to get his life together and not trying to make any more mistakes. He received his GED while in jail. My 21-year-old brother is an auto mechanic who is married with three children. My oldest sister is 25 with two boys. She lives at home with my family, and is taking a dental technician course at Margaret Washington Health Career Center. Another sister is currently taking accounting at the West Virginia Job Corps. My youngest sister is 14 and attends Shaw Junior High.

I attended Shaw Junior High and graduated in 1982. Later I attended Coolidge but dropped out of school because I was hanging around with the wrong crowd, smoking drugs, and skipping classes. I also believed I was going to fail. I attended Job Corps from August 1984 to April 1985. I left Job Corps because I was involved in too many fights. I was accused of hitting the "RA" with a chair but I didn't. Even though I was innocent, my record had built up and I had a bad reputation. I felt truly happy to leave because I wanted to come home to attend high school. I didn't return to high school because I learned about CYS and what it was about. I liked what CYS was doing for young kids and decided to stay here.

As far as my growing up, we were raised to deal with what we had. We were on public assistance when I was between ages 6 and 7. When I was young I had all the money I wanted by dealing drugs in order to get things. I first started using drugs when I was in the ninth grade, smoking "reefer". When I entered high school, I wanted something strong so I started smoking PCP. I stopped using drugs Thanksgiving 1984 because I didn't like what it was doing to me. There are better opportunities for me other than getting high. I decided "to go for it" and to be successful.

Success means having what I want, a decent job. It means to settle down with a family, a career and a college degree. When I was a kid I was raised by my mother. Later my mother met another man "Lonnie" (I liked him a lot and respect him). We've all been together for 12 or 13 years. He has shown me what life is about and has told me that education is more important than hanging out on the corner selling drugs. Selling drugs is hurting others. I am killing other people when I sell it to them. Lonnie and mom did not marry. I would like for them to marry but I won't press it. Lonnie told me that a man is someone who is on their own, who can budget, and provide for a family. He has taught me to stay out of trouble. A mind is a terrible thing to waste. I don't want to give up my freedom, it will be time wasted. My parents support me ever since I've been at CYS. I am happy that I made the decision to go to college. I never knew how much education can help.

Survival means to me not worrying about what someone else has, but being thankful for what I have because there are so many families out there poorer than what I was at 6 or 7. Some kids probably think the best way to get by is to knock someone over the head, snatch a lady's purse, or get a weapon in their hand and think they can accomplish anything with a gun. My opinion is that sooner or later you're going to get caught and you're going to have to give up your freedom.

Chairman **MILLER**. Thank you very much.

We have a young man on the move here.

Let me ask if Nancy Day is in the audience, one of our witnesses that might have come in late.

No. OK.

Tweedy, you mentioned that you had to move to a shelter recently. What were the circumstances which required you to live in a shelter?

Ms. **WILLIAMS**. Well, to make a long story short, my landlord lost the building that we were living in. And there were four families living in the building. All of us were evicted.

And there was really no place else that I could go. I was able to stay with my sister for a little while, but I could not move in with her because it would violate her lease, and it would not have done us any good for all of us to be out on the street. So I had to go into the shelter until I found someplace else to live.

Chairman **Miller**. But it was your landlord who failed to pay the——

Ms. **Williams**. He had failed on a mortgage note, I believe it was, for some time. And they just—on top of which I believe there was something else wrong with the building, either a gas leak or an electrical problem that he neglected to fix.

So the building was condemned, actually. It was just boarded up. Everybody had to be moved out.

Chairman **Miller**. How many families were living there?

Ms. **Williams**. There was two single women, myself and my son, and the woman next door with her two children.

Chairman **Miller**. You do not know if the other families were in the same predicament?

Ms. **Williams**. I know that the two women downstairs, I believe they had relatives that they were in with. The woman next door with her two children went to the Pitts Family Shelter on Belmont Street. I do not know if she is still there or not, but I had, because I only had one child, I was moved to the Greentree Shelter in Bethesda.

Chairman **Miller**. Aletha, in your current job, do you have health insurance coverage?

Ms. **Harris**. Yes. When I married my husband, he was military, 100 percent disabled. The military would give me free medical insurance.

After the marriage broke up, this is the first time. It is kind of hard for me to pay health insurance, because I never had to do it before. So apparently, I have an insurance that only pays something like 75 percent of the money. The other 25 percent I have to pay myself, and the bills of the 25 percent are really beginning to pile up on me because I do not have the funds. And people are beginning to take me to court because of the money is not there to pay the bill, or I am afraid to deposit in my checking account, because on one occasion someone did put a lien on my account and I could not take any money out.

So I have to be, you know, very cautious on payday about depositing in my account, because I do not know who is after me next.

Chairman **Miller**. Ms. Boggs.

Mrs. **Boggs**. Thank you very much.

I want to thank all of the witnesses for your wonderful testimony, and for your great courage and endurance.

Unfortunately, we have been summoned to go to vote on the House Floor, so that I will give the other members a chance to talk with you.

Thank all of you. And you stay in there.

Mrs. **Johnson**. I want to thank you for your determination, for your determination to raise your kids with a model of support and security that will enable them to take advantage of opportunities and fulfill some of the ideals that you have for yourselves, as well as for your dedication to education.

I just want to comment that I have introduced a welfare reform bill that would hook people immediately into education on a half-time basis and provide the day-care support and the medical coverage that is necessary to be able to go to school.

I have been very interested also in your testimony about transportation. To provide education and training does not make sense without transportation. I think we need to do more to create educational opportunity early on, so that when someone is looking for a job, he or she can find a job that will not only pay the rent but provide the food and some of the opportunity for advancement that a family needs in the long run.

Thank you for your testimony.

Chairman **Miller**. Ms. Boxer.

Mrs. **Boxer**. Yes. I wanted to ask our young man on the move, Michael, a question.

You obviously had a major change of heart; you turned your life around. And I get it from your testimony that it was Lonnie that was the influence in your life. Was there anyone else that you would credit with that change?

Obviously, it came from you, but he had a major effect on you. Anybody else in your life that made a change?

Mr. **Jacobs**. Ma. Ma, she done a great lot. She put clothes on my back. She put food in my belly. Made sure I got to school on time.

It was really both; it was half, you know. It was half-half, because both of them, they gave me courage to go to school. I used to tell everybody I hated school, you know, but now as I see how much education is, there is no reason for no one to hate school. Because if you want to get a decent job, you got to have that education. Education comes first before the job, you see.

Without the proper education, you can get laid off a job, for not knowing what to do, you see. You just need it, you know, because it is hard for an individual to get a decent job without education.

Mrs. **Boxer**. That is——

Mr. **Jacobs**. It is very hard.

Chairman **Miller**. Let me explain that the House of Representatives currently has a number of votes that are going to take place, and I am going to go ahead and continue the hearing here, and Members will be able to go vote and return, should they desire.

I just want people to know what is going on here. There is not a fire drill going on here.

Members will be able to come and go.

Ron, did you have any questions that you would like to ask?

Mr. **Dellums**. No. I have no questions.

Chairman **Miller**. OK.

Mr. **Dellums**. I am going to vote and come back.

Chairman **Miller**. OK.

Aletha, I think one of the things that people in the Congress certainly have got to understand is some of the tradeoffs that people without adequate financial resources have to make in terms of the decisions on whether or not you are going to buy food, whether you are going to pay your utility bills, whether you are going to pay your phone bill or your heating bill or your rent or what have you.

I think this is lost all too often on individuals that do not confront those situations. Can you describe how you try to get through to the end of the month with enough money?

Ms. **Harris**. Well, the thing is, I am getting a lot of friends just from going to church itself. They keep track of me 24 hours a day. I do not have a telephone at home because I had to make a choice between telephone and electricity. The house that I live in is all electric. Without any heat in the house, I have no hot water.

When my electricity went off during the winter last year—it was off for a week—I owed something like $325. The fuel rate in the winter with Pepco was something like $58 per kilowatt. In the summertime it is something like maybe $10 or $15, which is fine. If it was not for the fuel rate, I would have it made. But those fuel rates multiplied by those number of hours is what causes my utility to go up. The house has a heat pump on it, and if the temperature outside gets very cool, it automatically keeps it on even if I am not at home. I have to keep those pipes cooled in the house, because if I do not, they break, and I am responsible for repairing everything in the house.

If I do not have any electricity, I do not have hot water to take a bath. So I had to make a choice of whether to have a telephone at home, which I do need, or pay my electric bill. So I let my phone go off last November. It has been over a year now, and I have not had a telephone. And I tell people, if you want to talk to me, come to my house or call me at work.

They do not like it, but I tell them, when the phone was on, nobody called anyway. So it does not really make a difference. I have gotten used to it.

But it is a tragedy because, if a fire breaks out in my house, because I live in an all-white neighborhood, they are very prejudiced people, which one of them is going to let my kid come in their house and say there is a fire. The whole neighborhood would burn down. And I am so far away that I cannot get to them in adequate time. Or if something goes wrong at home, I have no way of knowing about it.

So, as a result, through the end of the month, I know I have to pay so much to keep the roof on my head. I know I have to pay utility bills. So what I did, I made friends with somebody at Pepco—and I will not call her name—I go down, and if my electricity bill is a certain amount, I tell her, look, this is all I have to pay. Like my electric bill is $112, I may go in and tell her, this is all I have; I will be back in a couple days with the rest. And what they do, they put some hold on your account.

Well, I never come back till maybe a month later. And I have been doing this on and on for the last 3 years, and it has not worked for me. Or if something really goes wrong, I will call Ms. Langley from PROP, Inc., (Pool Resources of People) or I call my church and say something is wrong. They have been very generous in helping me throughout the month. They have told me time and time again, if a tragedy come, do not wait till it happens, call them firsthand.

And that is how I really make it. If it was not for those people, who would help me? I would not have electricity, I would not have a roof over my head. Because the car note itself is $200 a month, and it is more than I can afford to pay.

Chairman **Miller**. You mentioned that your son is home alone in the morning——

Ms. **Harris**. Yes.

Chairman **Miller**. Because you leave for work and—before he gets on the bus to school. And is that also true in the afternoon when he gets home?

Ms. **Harris**. Yes. He is home, he gets out of school. The school is around the corner, so—it is not like around the corner. It is like leaving here and probably going down to the Monument. You have to ride the bus around a farm to get there. He gets out of school at 3 o'clock, and he gets home around 3:20. My daughter's is much further away. Someone has to pick her up from school, go by and pick up my little one, and then bring them both home in the evening for me. And that way I can come straight home. Because, you know, before that I did not have a car. We had to walk 2 miles, almost, to the day care for my little one, and sometimes the temperature would be about 30 below, you know, it gets very cold out there where I live.

And we had to walk, and some evenings I would call her at home when I had a phone, told her to start walking; stay in the house when she gets to the neighbor's house and thaw out a little bit, and then walk back, and carry adequate blankets.

Or if I did not have adequate transportation to get to work or get her there, I had to walk and then hitchhike a ride to work. And it was very, you know, rough for me.

So, monthly, I really do not bring in income enough every month. It is just enough to—I know what I have to do I must keep the roof over my head and I must pay the utility bill. Those are the only two things that I am concerned about, and that car note. Food, as far as food is concerned, Ms. Langley has provided me with plenty of dry food. And I told my kids, we may eat the same thing every month, or every day, it does not matter. I just want to make sure you have the roof on your head.

Chairman **Miller**. Tweedy, can you tell us about where you are living now?

Ms. **Williams**. Right now, I am living at Wayne Place in Southeast. It is a semi kind of dangerous area, more or less, because it is not really lit that well at night. There is a lot of drug activity outside, but it is more or less as long as you do not get involved in it, you know, which I do not, I really do not associate too much with the people in that area.

Chairman **Miller**. So you think it makes the neighborhood more dangerous, obviously?

Ms. **Williams**. Oh, definitely, definitely. The only person I really talk to or have any dealings with is the woman upstairs, because she watches my son for me sometimes when I am at work.

Other than that, I just mainly keep to myself and, you know, my roommate, she has a few friends around there that she talks to, but other than that, those are the only two people that I associate with.

Chairman **Miller**. What generally are the arrangements for taking care of your son while you are working?

Ms. Williams. Well, what it is, is usually I will leave the house at about 6 or 6:30 in the morning to get to work. Sometimes, depending on what my shift is, I will have to leave earlier. I will get myself dressed. If he is still asleep, I will just leave him there, because what has been happening sometimes is my roommate has been staying home, so she has been watching my son for me. And I will just take him from our room, take him into her room so she can watch him, just lay him on the bed. And most of the time he will still stay asleep. And then I will just leave, go to work, and then come back home.

Chairman **Miller**. What happens if those arrangements fall through for you?

Ms. **Williams**. Right now what I am doing is looking into day care. That has been a great concern on my mind, if she moves out or if she suddenly decides, well, I cannot watch him any more. I want to find a good day care that I can bring him to that is in the area, that is not too far away, that is close enough that, you know, I can drop him off and, you know, continue on to work.

And that is kind of a difficulty for me, because I have been taking buses, and I would have to leave a little bit later because the time of day that I leave to go to work, the bus I take is an express, and it does not stop until it gets to Northwest D.C. So I would have to leave at a later time and take a different bus.

So I really have not figured it all out yet, but I really have to sit down and, you know, map out my route and everything to make sure I still can get to work on time.

Chairman **Miller**. Michael, why do you think that a lot of your friends have not made the same decision you have with respect to trying to pursue an education? You said several times in your testimony that a lot of your friends are hanging around drugs, hanging around the corner. What do you think the difference is, or what do you think the barrier is that keeps them from making that kind of decision?

Mr. **Jacobs**. Themselves?

Chairman **Miller**. Yeah.

Mr. **Jacobs**. They passing up opportunities.

There is a lot of opportunities out here. You can walk down the street and find opportunities. You know, they might say, waitress or waiter for hire, you know. Some people, well, they be scared, they might think they are going to get embarrassed, think they might want to talk about them and say that you guys are not fit for the job, or you do not look right, and all this and that.

They passing their own opportunities. They have a mind, you know, they can do what they want to do. But drugs, that is not going to accomplish nothing.

Chairman **Miller**. You think they are afraid, generally?

Mr. **Jacobs**. Yeah, they are probably afraid. They are probably afraid, you know, to go for it. And smoking drugs, they in a way eat up your brain. You cannot think none like that. They got to be scared, you know, because I had one——

Chairman **Miller**. Do you think there is a way to reach those young people?

Mr. **Jacobs**. To reach them?

Chairman **Miller**. To work with them to try to——

Mr. JACOBS. I have tried it with them, I believe. It is like they try to hit you with a whammy, you know, think they going to—they say, does not matter what I say, you know. They are just too scared, you know, to take that next step. Instead of taking a step, they are taking two back. See, that is not going to get it, you know.

They probably, you know, realize one day, you know, what I was saying to them is true. And they might not, you know; it is all up to them, you know. They do not know—they going to laugh, Mike's in his college or whatever. And I come out to see what they still doing. The truth is, I am going to laugh at them. I am going to laugh at them, because they should have made that step.

There is no reason for them to wait 12, you know, 10 years, you know, without an education, you know, smoking drugs. That does not make no sense, you see. I am going to laugh at them. I am just going to laugh.

Chairman MILLER. Let me thank all of you for sharing your experiences and your insights with us, with the committee. I think it is very important, because I think, again—Congress all too often looks at poor people as one in two black children or one in six children, or 26 percent of something. And the fact is that all of the statistics are really made up of an awful lot of people in a difficult situation.

I think also—I hope my colleagues now better understood how much energy in each day is consumed in figuring out how you are going to get through that particular day or that particular week in terms of trying to set forth a strategy so that you can both get to work, get your children to school. Aletha, I understand one of your daughters is doing very, very well in school.

Ms. HARRIS. Yeah, the one is, in the school that they helped pay her to, and she has been on the honor roll since she has been there.

Chairman MILLER. That is fantastic.

And I just think that some of this testimony, hopefully, will give people a greater understanding of the kinds of difficulties that people endure who are impoverished in this country. And I think what becomes clear is your situation is not atypical. There are a lot of people in this particular situation.

We have heard similar testimony from different individuals around the country explaining the exact same kinds of problems that arise when the babysitter did not show up, and you had decided to risk your job by staying home, or when your car did not work, and you were fired because you missed work. There are many, many, many, many ways to be victimized by poverty. It is not that you did not pay your rent. It is that your landlord did not pay his rent. And time and again, that kind of thing happens.

It is tragic, and this committee is now finding itself, and the Congress is finding itself, completely caught up in this issue, because poverty has become a growth industry in America. That is the class that is growing; poor people. And it is engulfing people who never thought they would be there, and it is holding down a lot of people who have been there for a long time.

And I really just want to tell you how much I appreciate your coming forward and sharing some of this with us, and I think giving us not only a human dimension, but a perspective on what it is like to live in this situation.

I would like to believe that your testimony in and of itself would be enough to get my colleagues to reverse many of the actions that they have taken with respect to programs to help poor families and children to survive these difficulties. But I am not sure of that.

I guess the encouraging thing is that we now see in national poll after national poll that the American people think that we should do more to help poor people. And I guess maybe that means that the Americans are not as mean spirited as the Congress of the United States. But hopefully at some point that would become translated to the Congress, and maybe we will see some compassion and understanding for the real situation millions of our American citizens face, who simply do not share in the bounty of this country that others do.

And so I really want to thank you very, very much for your time and your testimony, and I know for all my colleagues. You certainly have our best wishes and our support for what you are doing.

Thank you very much.

Ms. **Williams**. Thank you.

Ms. **Harris**. Thank you.

Mr. **Jacobs**. Thank you.

Chairman **Miller**. The next panel will be made up of Stephanie Epps and Ana Moreno, who will be accompanied by Joseph Citro; Katherine Ferrell, Fred Taylor, and Ayo Handy.

If they would come forward at this time and take seats there, we will be prepared to receive your testimony in a minute or two.

[Short recess.]

Chairman **Miller**. Welcome to the committee and thank you in advance for your time and your help with the committee in putting this hearing together.

And we will begin, Stephanie, with your testimony.

Steph, go ahead, and relax, and just give us the testimony in the way you are most comfortable.

STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE EPPS, AGE 17, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. **Epps**. My name is Stephanie Epps. I am 17 years old, and I have two sons. Cedric is 3, and Thomas is 5 months. I am in the 10th grade at Cardozo High School.

When I was about 1½ or 2, I moved to North Carolina to live with my grandparents in the country. There was a lot of rioting going on in the city then, and my mother thought it would be safer for me down there. I loved being in the country, climbing trees and chasing pigs, things of that nature. In 1980, my grandfather died, so I had to move back here with my grandmother.

I live with my mother, my 10-year-old sister, and my two sons in a three-room apartment in northwest. My grandmother lives with my aunt nearby. The apartment is too small for all of us. My sister sleeps on the couch. There is no room to set up a crib, so I have to share a bed in one bedroom with Thomas, and my mother sleeps with my other son in the other bedroom.

It is bumpy living with so many people, especially on the weekends when everyone is home. During the week I usually get up at 4 a.m. so I can get everything together before I leave for school.

Sometimes I get up at 2 a.m. or 2:30 a.m. so I can study. Otherwise I study in between cries or when Thomas is sleeping.

I did not know I was pregnant with Cedric until the sixth month. The school nurse told me to go to Shaw Community Health Center, and the doctor finally told me I was pregnant. My mother had health insurance from her job. She is a cashier at a Peoples Drug store. But we did not, so my mother had to pay $40 for each doctor visit. Sometimes I had to go two or three times a month. We had to put $150 down front before I could go to the hospital to give birth. The delivery cost over $600, plus around $1,000 for the hospital. My mother would pay the doctor one week, and the hospital the next.

Since my mother was working and she was unable to take care of Cedric, and my aunt was in school, I thought I was going to have to drop out of school. But then my grandmother agreed to care for him as long as I came directly home after school each day. Now that I am at Cardozo, I leave Thomas at the infant center at school. Cedric is too old for the center, so my grandmother still cares for him.

After Cedric was born, he began to receive public assistance. It is supposed to pay for pampers, milk, food, and clothing. Sometimes it was enough and sometimes I would run out of milk and my mother would have to buy more.

The second time I got pregnant I went to the doctor the third month. My mother had to pay for all the doctor bills again. After I delivered we had close to 2,000 dollars' worth of medical bills. We tried to get on Medicaid then, but it took a few months.

We had to keep paying the doctor until they added Thomas. They added him to public assistance right away, but it still is not always enough. Thomas is now on the WIC Program, which helps with the milk, but it usually runs out before the last of the month.

Being a parent is no luxury. It has been about 3 years since I had my last pair of jeans. I get clothes for my kids from Goodwill. My kids always come first. Whatever they need, I try to get it for them. Very seldom can I give them a new toy. They play with toys my grandmother and mother gave me and my sister when we were small.

After I finish school, I plan to either be a hairdresser or go to the army. If I go to the army I will try to have my kids on the base with me. If I am a hairdresser I have to find a babysitter.

I am just trying to raise my kids the best way I can.

Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Stephanie Epps follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF STEPHANIE EPPS

My name is Stephanie Epps. I am 17 years old, and I have 2 sons. Cedric is 3, and Thomas is 5 months. I'm in the 10th grade at Cardozo High School.

When I was one and a half or 2, I moved to North Carolina to live with my grandparents in the country. There was a lot of rioting in the city then, and my mother thought it would be safer for me down there. I loved being in the country, climbing trees and chasing pigs. In 1980, my grandfather died so I moved back here with my grandmother.

I now live with my mother, 10-year-old sister, and my 2 sons in a 3-room apartment in Northwest. My grandmother lives with my aunt nearby. The apartment is too small for all of us. My sister sleeps on the couch. There's no room to set up a crib, so I share a bed in one bedroom with Thomas, and my mother sleeps with my older son in the other bedroom.

It's bumpy to live with so many people, especially on the weekends when everyone is home. During the week I usually get up at 4:00 so I can get everything together before I leave for school. Sometimes I get up at 2:00 to 2:30 so I can study. Otherwise I study in between cries, or when Thomas is sleeping.

I didn't know I was pregnant with Cedric until the 6th month. The school nurse told me to go to the Shaw Community Health Center, and the doctor finally told me I was pregnant.

My mother had health insurance from her job (she's a cashier at People's Drug store), but we didn't, so my mother had to pay $40 for each doctor visit. Sometimes I had to go 2 or 3 times a month. We had to put $150 down before I could go to the hospital to give birth. The delivery cost over $600, plus around $1,000 for the hospital. My mother would pay the doctor one week, and the hospital the next.

Since my mother was working she couldn't take care of Cedric, and my aunt was in school. I thought I was going to have to drop out of school, but then my grandmother agreed to care for him as long as I came directly home after school every day. Now that I'm at Cardozo, I leave Thomas at the Infant Center at the school. Cedric is too old for the Center, so my grandmother still cares for him.

After Cedric was born he began to receive public assistance. It is supposed to pay for pampers, milk, food and clothing. Sometimes it was enough, but sometimes the milk would run out and my mother would have to buy more.

The second time I got pregnant I went to the doctor the third month. My mother had to pay for all the doctors bills again. After I delivered we had close to $2,000 worth of medical bills. We tried to get on Medicaid then, but it took a few months.

We had to keep paying the doctor until they added Thomas. They added him to public assistance right away, but it still isn't always enough. Thomas is now on WIC too, which helps with the milk, but it usually doesn't last to the end of the month.

Being a parent is no luxury. It's been about 3 years since I had my last pair of jeans. I get clothes for the kids at Goodwill. My kids always come first. Whatever they need I try to get it for them. Very seldom can I give them new toys. They play with the toys my grandmother and mother gave to me and my sister when we were little.

After I finish school, I plan to either be a hairdresser or go to the army. If I go to the army I'll try to have my kids on the base with me. If I'm a hairdresser I'll have to find a babysitter.

I'm just trying to raise them the best I can.

Chairman **Miller**. Stephanie, thank you very much.

Ana does not speak English?

Mr. **Citro**. No.

Chairman **Miller**. So, Joseph, you are going to translate?

Mr. **Citro**. Yes.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you. You may begin.

STATEMENT OF ANA MORENO, PARENT, WASHINGTON, DC, TRANSLATED BY JOSEPH CITRO, M.S.W., EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, THE FAMILY PLACE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. **Moreno**. My name is Ana Moreno. I am married, from El Salvador, and have four children, 12, 10, 9, and 3 years of age. I came to Washington 12 years ago with the help of my aunt, who obtained legal entry for me.

It was very difficult for me to leave my country, since I had to leave behind my first child, who was less than a year old at that time. I still have not been able to bring him here to live with the rest of the family. However, I knew that I could not afford to miss the opportunity to come to the United States.

Upon arrival in this country, I began work as a domestic and remained in that position for 6 years. Of course, by living and working in the house, I received room and board. I had a very difficult time adjusting to life in the United States, because of the difference of the language and the shock of living in a very different culture.

My problems began in earnest when I married and had my children. We had to rent an apartment, and shortly after we moved in, it was set on fire, displacing many families.

The Red Cross helped us find an apartment, which we are living in at present. We have had many problems with this apartment. First, the rent is much too expensive; and second, the building has many problems and few services.

For example, 2 years ago I spoke with the building's manager and asked that a large hole that had been made to fix the hot water be closed. That same hole remains open in the wall today.

I feel like no one hears us. It could be because of the difference of language, or simply because we are Hispanic. I do not know, but like other parents, we want a safe and healthy home for our children. But that is impossible because of our income.

My husband works as a busboy and I work as a domestic. We have never sought assistance from the Government and have chosen to live on what we earned. We have had to adjust our family lifestyle to meet our budget, which is so low you would not be able to believe that we could survive on so little. During the time of need, we have found the needed help and support at the Family Place.

A few months ago I traveled to my country to see my child and my mother, whom I had not seen for 6 years; in the hope also of finally bringing my son to this country. However, since my son was not born here I had to receive permission from the American Embassy.

Once I arrived in El Salvador, I felt like I could not dare ask for my son's visa, since I knew it would be denied on the basis of our income. Despite the sadness I feel at the inability to have all of my children together, I know that we have to keep on working so that we can be together one day, as all families should be. In the meantime, I continue my life with my husband and my three sons.

To make our situation worse, a short while ago I lost my cleaning job because they would no longer allow me to take my 3-year-old son, Oscar, who is here with us, with me. I do not make enough to pay a private babysitter, and finding a day care program is practically impossible. It seems like I will have to wait until he reaches school age so that I can work. For now, like many other parents, the only alternative is to wait and hope.

[Prepared statement of Ana Moreno follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF ANA MORENO (ENGLISH TRANSLATION)

My name is Ana Moreno. I am married, from El Salvador, and have four children—12, 10, 9 and 3 years of age. I came to Washington twelve years ago with the help of my aunt who obtained for me legal entry.

It was very difficult for me to leave my country since I had to leave behind my first child who was less than a year old at that time. I still have not been able to bring him here to live with the rest of the family. However, I knew that I could not afford to miss the opportunity to come to the United States.

Upon arrival in this country, I began work as a domestic and remained in that position for six years. Of course, by living and working in the house, I received room and board. I had a very difficult time adjusting to life in the United States because of the difference of the language and the shock of living in a very different culture.

My problems really began in earnest when I married and had my children. We had to rent an apartment which shortly after we moved in, was set on fire, displacing many families. The Red Cross helped us find an apartment which we are living in at present. We have had many problems with this apartment. First, the rent is much too expensive, and secondly, the building has many problems and few services. For example, two years ago I spoke with the building's manager and asked that a large hole that had been made to fix the water be closed. That same open hole remains in the wall today.

I feel like no one hears us. It could be because of the difference of language or simply because we are Hispanic. I do not know, but like other parents we want a safe and healthy home for our children but that is impossible because of our income. My husband works as a busboy and I work as a domestic.

We never have sought assistance from the government and have chosen to live on what we earned. We have had to adjust our family lifestyle to meet our budget which is so low you would not be able to believe that we could survive on so little. During times of need, we have found the needed help and support at the Family Place.

A few months ago I traveled to my country to see my child and my mother, whom I had not seen for six years, in the hope, also, of finally bringing my son to this country. However, since my son was not born here I had to receive permission from the American Embassy. Once I arrived in El Salvador, I felt like I could not dare ask for my son's visa since I knew it would be denied on the basis of our income. Despite the sadness I feel at the inability to have all of my children together, I know that we have to keep working so that we can be together one day as all families should be. In the meantime I continue my life with my husband and three sons.

To make our situation worse, a short while ago I lost my cleaning job because they would no longer allow me to take my year old son with me. I do not make enough to pay a private babysitter, and finding a day care program is practically impossible. It seems like I will have to wait until he reaches school age so that I can work. For now, like many other parents the only alternative is to wait and hope.

Prepared Statement of Ana Moreno (in Spanish)

Mi nombre es Ana Moreno, soy de El Salvador, casada, tengo cuatro hijos de 12, 10, 9 y 3 años. Llegué a Washington hace doce años. Una tía me ayudó para que entrara legalmente a este país. Fue muy difícil porque yo tenía un niño que en ese tiempo tenía menos de un año y todavía no lo puedo traer conmigo. Lo dejé en El Salvador porque en ese tiempo no quería perder la oportunidad que tenía de venir a los Estados Unidos. Al llegar a este país trabajé por seis años como doméstica en una casa donde tenía vivienda y comida. Fue muy difícil para mí por el idioma y la cultura muy diferente a la de mi país, pero lo más difícil comenzó cuando me casé y tuve mis niños. Tuvimos que alquilar un apartamento que al poco tiempo de vivir en el edificio se incendió. Fuimos ayudados por la Cruz Roja y nos consiguieron un apartamento en el cual hasta hoy estamos viviendo. Desde que nos mudamos hemos tenido problemas; primero por la renta tan alta y segundo por la incomodidad y los problemas que el edificio presenta. Por ejemplo: hace dos años hablé con el administrador del edificio porque hicieron un hueco en la pared para reparar el agua caliente y hasta hoy día todavía estoy esperando que lo reparen. Siento que nadie nos escucha, sería por el idioma o porque somos hispanos. Yo no sé pero como padres quisiéramos que nuestros hijos tuvieran un ambiente más seguro y saludable, algo que es imposible por los salarios. Mi esposo trabaja como "busboy" y yo como doméstica. Nunca hemos pedido ayuda del gobierno. Nosotros tenemos que ajustarnos a un presupuesto muy bajo que si se los digo no creerán cómo podemos sobrevivir. Durante los tiempos más difíciles hemos encontrado apoyo en Family Place. Un ejemplo es que hace poco fui a mi país; quería ver a mi hijo y a mi madre que hace seis años no veía y a la vez quería traerlo conmigo. Como él no nació en U.S.A., tenía que pedirlo a la Embajada de los E.U. en mi país. Estando allí no me atreví pués pensé que me le negarían la visa al saber el ingreso nuestro. Con esa tristeza tengo que seguir hasta que llegue el día que cambie nuestra situación y pueda estar con todos mis hijos. Por el momento estamos solamente mi esposo y yo con tres de mis niños. Para agravar más la situación económica hace poco tiempo dejé de trabajar porque tengo un niño pequeño y ya no me permitieron llevarlo más a mi trabajo. No gano lo suficiente para pagar quien lo cuide y no encuentro un "Day-Care" que hasta el momento lo acepte. Creo que tendré que esperar la edad escolar para llevarlo a la escuela. Mientras tanto, junto con muchos padres más, lo único que tengo que hacer es esperar.

Chairman Miller. Thank you.

Joe, can you just describe for me the Family Place, while we have the microphones with you?

Mr. CITRO. OK. The Family Place is a program for pregnant women and for parents who have children 3 years of age and under. It is a combination of daily enrichment activities, social services, and parenting education.

Chairman MILLER. How many people?

Mr. CITRO. The program has two centers. One is located in Northwest Washington, and there we serve about 400 families a year. About 98 percent of those are Spanish-speaking immigrants from the various parts of Central and South America.

In the Northeast we do a program, along with the Visiting Nurse Association, called the Better Babies Project. And there we try to reach out and find all the pregnant women in a given target area, assess them for the possibility of giving birth to low-birth-weight babies, put them in touch with various kinds of interventions in the hope of bringing down the infant mortality and low-birth-weight rate in the area of Northeast Washington.

Our work there is also part of a research project of the National Institutes of Health.

Chairman MILLER. What is the makeup of that clientele in the Northeast?

Mr. CITRO. That clientele is all black.

Chairman MILLER. All black. What is the age?

Mr. CITRO. The age could be anyone who is pregnant, so it certainly spans the range from 17 up to 40, as far as the Northeast center.

The Northwest center, most of the people there are between 20 and 30 years of age, and a large number of them have been in this country less than 3 years.

Chairman MILLER. I see. Thank you.

Mr. Taylor.

STATEMENT OF FRED TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FOR LOVE OF CHILDREN [FLOC], WASHINGTON, DC

Mr. TAYLOR. Mr. Chairman, I am Fred Taylor, executive director of For Love of Children [FLOC].

For Love of Children is a 20-year-old community organization whose purpose is to help troubled children and families who are homeless, abused, or neglected. We work with children in need of foster care and the parents of those children to make possible the reuniting of the parents and children. We work with families in need of housing and support services, and children and youth with emotional, behavioral, and learning problems who are referred to us by the D.C. Public Schools and Department of Human Resources. FLOC also operates a child advocacy center which focuses on systemic problems of the D.C. child welfare system.

I have been executive director of FLOC for the past 19 years. Over this time, I have seen locally at first hand what observers of the national scene describe as the pauperization of women and children.

When FLOC began its work in the District of Columbia in the mid-1960's, perhaps half of the families we dealt with were two-parent families. Today, these families are almost entirely women with children. This trend is apparently the pattern throughout the country. Families with two wage earners are generally making it. Those left behind are women with children.

Unfortunately, this number is growing from less than 50 percent of those under the poverty line 20 years ago to roughly 75 percent today to a projected 90 percent or more by the year 2000. A related pattern is the disproportionate number of male youth who were raised in poverty who are now in the prison population or who have dropped out of the labor force altogether.

The personal and societal problems created by this increasing trend of low-income women raising children alone are awesome, and these problems are being compounded as the general affluence in the upper level of society pushes the cost of essentials like housing, food, clothing, and medical care upward while women and children try to cope with the static income level of minimum-wage jobs or public assistance.

Rather than concentrate in this testimony on the true bleakness of this current local and national crisis, however, I would like in a few paragraphs to describe what my personal experience has taught me about female-headed households holding their own and bettering themselves in partnership with caring neighbors, a caring community, and where it is true, a caring nation.

I do this because it is hope that leads us to action rather than despair, whether the actor be an individual, community, or nation.

Let me start with housing. I have seen repeatedly how affordable housing plus firm and enforced expectations about rental payments and practical assistance to teach tenants to do their own household repairs has introduced a critical ingredient of stability, and in turn, raised family morale, self-esteem, and energy to a sufficient level to start a steady climb of family betterment.

Second, I have seen repeatedly how previously isolated families, once connected to a caring support system, gain increased confidence and energy to nurture and discipline their children and to take a direct interest in their school performance, health, and dental care, et cetera. The downward cycle of instability and despair is replaced by an upward cycle of movement from one small step to another.

What I am trying to illustrate in a very brief manner is the contention that the overcoming of destitute and disabling poverty is like climbing stairsteps. The stairsteps have to be there. Overwhelmed people without the energy of hope cannot leap to self-sufficiency, but they are able to take one step at a time and genuinely move up a staircase of individual and family opportunity and functioning.

Establishing access to this process, or denying access by neglect, has profound social and economic consequences for this city and this country. Establishing stairsteps out of poverty is a doable job. I have seen it operate repeatedly, but it requires intensive and purposeful initiation at all levels—individual, city, State, and national.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my views.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

[Prepared statement of Fred Taylor follows:]

PREPARED STATEMENT OF FRED TAYLOR, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, FOR LOVE OF CHILDREN [FLOC], WASHINGTON, DC

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Unfortunately, this number is growing—from less than 50 percent of those under the poverty line twenty years ago to roughly 75 percent today to a projected 90 percent or more by the year 2000. A related pattern is the disproportionate number of male youth who were raised in poverty who are not in the prison population.

The personal and societal problems created by this increasing trend of low-income women raising children alone are awesome, and these problems are being compounded as the general affluence in the upper level of society pushes the cost of essentials like housing, food, clothing and medical care upward while women with children try to cope with the static income level of minimum-wage jobs or public assistance.

Rather than concentrate in this testimony on the true bleakness of this current local and national crisis, however, I would like in a few paragraphs to describe what my personal experience has taught me about female-headed households holding their own and bettering themselves in partnership with caring neighbors, a caring community and a caring nation.

I do this because it is hope that leads us to action rather than despair, whether the actor be an individual, community or nation.

Let me start with housing. I have seen repeatedly how affordable housing plus firm and enforced expectations about rental payments and practical assistance to teach tenants to do their own household repairs has introduced the critical ingredient of stability and, in turn, raised family morale, self-esteem and energy to a sufficient level to start a steady climb of family betterment.

Second, I have seen repeatedly how previously isolated families, once connected to a caring support system, gain increased confidence and energy to nurture and discipline their children and to take a direct interest in their school performance, health and dental care, etc. The downward cycle of instability and despair is replaced by an upward cycle of movement from one small step to another.

What I am trying to illustrate in a very brief manner is the contention that the overcoming of destitute and disabling poverty is like climbing stairsteps. The stairsteps have to be there. Overwhelmed people without the energy of hope cannot leap to self-sufficiency, but they are able to take one step at a time and genuinely move up a staircase of individual and family opportunity and functioning. Establishing access to this process or denying access by neglect has profound social and economic consequences for this city and this country.

Establishing stairsteps out of poverty is a do-able job. I have seen it operate repeatedly, but it requires intensive and purposeful initiative at all levels—individual, city, state, national.

Thank you for this opportunity to share my views.

STATEMENT OF AYO HANDY, DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES, SOUTHEAST NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE, WASHINGTON, DC

Ms. **HANDY**. Hello. My name is Ayo Handy——

Chairman **MILLER**. Ayo. Excuse me.

Ms. **HANDY**. That is all right.

I am the director of community services at Southeast House.

In the last two decades, the feminization of poverty is the phrase that has been used to describe the alarming trend of women and their dependent children who have swelled the welfare lists and offices of social service agencies. According to data compiled in 1983 by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, women head approximately one-half of all families in poverty, and that is a national statistic.

In the Nation's Capital, figures compiled for the 1970–80 U.S. census show the number of poor, young, black mothers with incomes below $5,000 had increased by almost 50 percent. Significantly, the primary source of income for young black women who make up the District's poor is public assistance, which is commonly called PA.

The average income from public assistance in 1979 was $2,630, which is $529 more than the average income received from earnings for poor black mothers in the District. Without question, the young black woman who receives a larger income from public assistance than she can from wage earnings makes a real clear choice. Why work at a low-paying job when you can earn more, relax at home, and be taken care of by the Government?

What are the circumstances that have contributed to the numbers of women and children who live in poverty? Providers of social services and advocates of the poor see these factors as the major problem.

The first fact is that the rate of divorce, which has doubled since 1959, has a crippling effect on women, who have to deal with the emotional and financial responsibilities of heading a household by themselves.

The second factor is that the rate of out-of-wedlock births have tripled from 1959 to 1982. In 1983, teenage mothers accounted for 1,792 or 18.8 percent of all D.C. residential live births. That is a large figure, but, however, in the poorer sections of the city, wards 5, 6, 7, and 8, the actual count is 1,236, or 69 percent of all births to teenage mothers, which means that the larger percentage of teenage births are happening in the poorer areas of the city.

Babies making babies creates a multitude of health risks, educational, and financial problems for the child and mother alike.

The third factor is that the low wages and limited potential for promotion of women is often a big problem due to the segregated patterns of job discrimination that women have to incur traditionally.

The fourth factor is that inadequate child care services from the preschool to the child who needs before- and after-school care has always been a problem that has hampered the mobility of women seeking out-of-home job opportunities. As was mentioned earlier, many women want to get out and work, but they cannot. By the time they pay for a babysitter and transportation the money that they would earn is lost in the paying of the out-of-the-home opportunity to do work.

The fifth factor is that the limited access to education and skills training opportunities for women which stress self-sufficiency and self-esteem building are very, very hard to find and difficult for women to ascertain.

All of the aforementioned circumstances impact on every aspect of living and surviving that women must handle in their impoverished environments.

The woman in poverty, more often, is the offspring of impoverished conditions herself, and this cycle of dependency may continue for generations. Poverty means poor nutrition, so the women of poverty more often have a higher risk of serious health problems which get passed on to their children.

The women of poverty live in substandard, low-income housing which lowers self-esteem to expect nothing more than substandard lifestyles. Crime, addicts, abandoned cars that breed rodents and pests, abuse from neighbors, and abuse from city agencies, become part of the day-to-day expectation of living.

The women of poverty, with little education and stifled aspirations, attempt to raise their children amidst the frustration of crowded schools with few recreational outlets and peer pressure that encourages most youth to give up and blend into the hopelessness of their surroundings. Many of these women drop out of school and would be considered functionally illiterate, barely able to read an employment application or comprehend simple written instructions. Oftentimes, they cannot even help their children with the homework.

The acquisition of knowledge is one of the last things on most poor women's survival agenda. So, they do not do very well in motivating their children about the value of education. More often, ignorance continues to beget ignorance.

I am the project coordinator for Community Services at Southeast House, which is a 56-year-old social service agency in one of the poorest sections of the city. It is the area known as Anacostia. I get a chance to see the effects of poverty, every day, on the clients that we serve.

Anacostia is a very interesting section of the city. Poor areas are right next to very affluent areas.

The Community Services staff of 5 people serve an average of 400 people a month, providing employment, education, housing counseling, and crisis intervention. Three-fourths of our clients are women who have children and they receive public assistance. I believe my staff faces these challenges well.

For example, this week we attempted to find an apartment at the District fair market rate for rental units, which averages about $300 for a one-bedroom apartment. In Southeast this is marginally liveable. The roof is not falling over your head; rats and roaches are not quite as apparent. This is an apartment that would be somewhat desirable for a person to want to get into.

But at $300 for an apartment, the client only receives $327 in public assistance income, and gets $156 in food stamps for herself and two children. Finding an apartment with limited money and in a desirable situation is playing with a stacked deck. But you continue to try, despite the odds.

My staff and I keep trying to help clients like this, because some of us have been there, and we know full well the effects of poverty, firsthand. We keep thinking just maybe something will change for the better. In the meantime, our cabinets do get thicker with files of our sister clients who struggle to make it, and we do the best we can to help them.

I want to add to this testimony, because I did not get an opportunity to write some of my own firsthand experiences. One of the things that is important in working in social services is that you empathize with the people that you deal with. I have had enough of my own firsthand experiences in poverty to be able to do this.

I speak from the experience of being a single parent myself who has had to deal with my own two children without assistance. I left my marriage about 10 years ago, and—I am sorry. I left my marriage of 10 years. I left that marriage about 5 years ago.

I had to rebuild my whole life, which meant adjusting to a different type of lifestyle. I have been in college, and I have been working in social service agencies most of the time that I have been working. But traditionally, working in social services, you get laid off a lot because social service agencies lose their funding.

I was out of full-time work at the time that I left my husband, and I worked as a typist, temporary. And in the process of working as a temporary, I decided to start my own business. I was really excited about making this effort to start my own business, but soon after deciding that I was going to do this, I learned quite a number of the realities that occur when someone makes an effort to pull up on their own.

I got an efficiency apartment which was around Dupont Circle—I was very fortunate I got an apartment at Dupont Circle at the range of about $200 a month, and it included utilities. My children stayed with me part of the time, and when they did, I had a walk-in closet, and the children slept in the walk-in closet.

It is hard enough to start a business, but as a single mother without any money and having children, it is even harder. Over the months I attempted to start the business, I did get some temporary work as a typist, but it was not coming in on a regular basis. So, I decided to apply for public assistance.

The public assistance is a strange phenomenon to be on. They did not really encourage me to get off of public assistance, but they did not really encourage my self-sufficiency at the same time. What they did was what I call maintenance. They supplemented my income from my fledgling business, but they did not offer me any incentive or assistance to go forward and really make strides to make the business an adequate one that would provide me with income that would take care of my family.

If I would earn money as a temporary, I would have to report it in to the welfare system, and they would take that money which I earned away from my welfare check, which was just about $200 during 1981. Actually, what would happen is that you end up manipulating with a whole lot less. You make a little bit of money from outside earnings, and then that is taken away from you in your welfare check. And so you are back, really, where you started—with no money.

Then you also, as I mentioned, have to pay child care and transportation costs. And by the time you do all of that, you really are in a desperate state.

Eventually, I realized that the way to maneuver myself out of this whole desperate situation was that I would continue to go ahead with my business, but I would do something which many people in the black community do. There is always one business which is very easy to get into with very little cash investment, and you end up yielding a very high rate of return. I decided to sell drugs, which I did for almost a year.

In the process of selling drugs, I got strung out, which is a term meaning that I got caught up in my own business. I lost more money than I was making, and I began to spend a lot less attention on my business, which was the original reason that I needed to earn the additional money for in the first place.

At the time, food stamps were cut back by a Federal decision, and I was really going through a maze of hopelessness.

I realized after about a year of this cycle that I had to stop it all. I would have to stop my business, get off of drugs, and go back to work, which is what I did.

I have got to admit my situation of poverty has been very unique. The insights that I have learned, have given me understanding to speak on, I think, the situation that occurs to many black people who are trying to raise themselves up by the bootstraps. Many times, it is harder to do this, and it is easier to just accept the handouts in the hopelessness of it all. You can get very apathetic, and you begin to accept what seems like your lot in life—a poor woman who just does nothing but struggle. We are always taught that coping is part of something that we do very well. And many poor women in poverty do cope for many, many years with lowered self-esteem and by manipulating of the little bit of resources that they have, which continues to cripple their lot in life.

[Prepared statement of Ayo Handy follows:]

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In the last two decades, "the feminization of poverty," is the phrase that has been used to describe the alarming trend of women and their dependent children who have swelled the welfare lists and the offices of social service agencies. According to data compiled in 1983 by the U.S. Civil Rights Commission, women head approximately one-half of all families in poverty, nationally.

In the nation's capital, figures compiled for the 1970-1980 U.S. Census, showed the number of poor young black mothers with incomes below $5,000, had increased by almost 50 percent. Significantly, the primary source of income for young black women who make up the District's poor, is public assistance (commonly called P.A.). The average income from public assistance in 1979 was $2,630 which is $529 more than the average income received from earnings. Without question, the young black woman who receives a larger income from P.A. than she can from wage earnings, makes a clear choice. Why work at a low-paying job when you can earn more, relax at home, and be taken care of by the government.

What are the circumstances that have contributed to the numbers of women and children who live in poverty? Providers of social services and advocates of the poor see these factors as the major problem:

1. The rate of divorce which has doubled since 1959, crippling women with the emotional and financial responsibility of heading a household.

2. The rate of out-of-wedlock births tripled from 1959 to 1982. In 1983, teenage mothers accounted for 1,792 or 18.8 percent of all D.C. resident live births. However, in the poorer sections of the city, Wards 5, 6, 7 and 8 accounted for 1,236 or 69.0 percent of all births to teenage mothers. Babies making babies creates a multitude of health risks, educational and financial problems for the child and mother alike.

3. The low wages and limited potential for promotions of women due to segregated patterns of job discrimination.

4. Inadequate child care services from pre-school to before and after care for children of all ages, which hampers the mobility of women seeking out-of-home opportunities.

5. The limited access to education and skills training opportunities for women, which stress self-sufficiency and self-esteem building.

All of the aforementioned circumstances impact on every aspect of living and surviving that women must handle in their impoverished environments.

The woman in poverty, more often, is the offspring of impoverished conditions herself and this cycle of dependency may continue for generations. Poverty means poor nutrition, so the women of poverty more often have a higher risk of serious health problems which get passed on to their children. The women of poverty live in substandard, low-income housing which lowers self-esteem to expect nothing more than substandard lifestyles. Crime, addicts, abandoned cars that breed rodents and pests, abuse from neighbors and abuse from city agencies, becomes part of the day-to-day expectation of living.

The women of poverty, with little education and stiffled aspirations, attempt to raise their children amidst the frustration and squalor of crowded schools, with few recreational outlets and peer pressure that encourages most youths to give up and blend into the hopelessness of the surroundings. Many of these women dropped out of school and would be considered functionally illiterate—barely able to read an employment application, or comprehend simple, written instructions and can't even help their children with their homework. The acquisition of knowledge is one of the last things on most poor women's survival agenda. So, they don't do real well in motivating their children about the value of education. Ignorance unfortunately continues to beget ignorance.

As the Project Coordinator for Community Services at Southeast House, a 56 year old social service agency in one of the poorest sections of the City, the area known as Anacostia, I see the effects that poverty has on the clients we serve.

The community services staff of 5 people service an average of 400 people a month, providing employment, education, housing counseling and crisis intervention. Three-fourths of our clients are women who have children and receive public assistance. My staff faces these challenges well.

For example, this week they attempted to find an apartment at the District's fair market rate for rental units—averaging $300 for a so-so, one bedroom apartment in southeast, for a client who receives only $327 in public assistance income and $156 in food stamps, for herself and two children. Finding an apartment in this situation is like playing with a stacked deck, but you keep playing despite the odds.

My staff and I keep playing and trying to help clients like this, because some of us have been there, and know full well the effects of poverty firsthand. We keep thinking—just maybe—something will change for the better. In the meantime, our cabinets get thicker with files of our sister clients, who struggle to make it.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

What has become very clear here this morning is the ability and strength of people in poverty to cope and to not simply give up and throw in the towel. I think another point is clearly, from the witnesses this morning, the incredible commitment to the children by their mothers.

I think, Stephanie, you have obviously displayed that commitment.

Let me ask you, at Cardozo are you enrolled in the parenting class?

Ms. **Epps**. Yes.

Chairman **Miller**. Is that helping you?

Can you pull the microphones over?

Ms. **Epps**. Yes, it is.

Chairman **Miller**. What kind of subjects do you cover in the parenting class?

Ms. **Epps**. We go from the physical development up to the emotional development, which is how they physically think and how they emotionally are between different age groups.

Chairman **Miller**. Do you think that has helped you with your sons?

Ms. **Epps**. Yes.

Chairman **Miller**. Help you understand a little bit more of what they are doing?

Ms. **Epps**. Yes, I think.

Chairman **Miller**. What do you do with your sons? You come directly home from school and then you are responsible for their care; is that right? Your grandmother takes care of them while you are at school, but then when you come home, what kind of activities do you engage in?

Ms. **Epps**. If I have the time when I come home, I study; and then if I do not, well, my other son, he watches TV if he is not reading a book or something. If he is reading a book, then I help him. Otherwise, I am watching the baby, or either watching TV with my older son, if the baby's not asleep.

Chairman **Miller**. So you study when you come home. You said in your testimony, also that sometimes you get up as early as 2 o'clock in the morning. I assume that is because the house is quiet and you are able to get some time in then to study?

Ms. **Epps**. Yes.

Chairman **Miller**. What is the living arrangement? How big is the house that you live in?

Ms. **Epps**. It is a three-room apartment. It is not really that big. I guess, a medium-size place.

Chairman **Miller**. It is a medium-size place; it has one bedroom?

Ms. **Epps**. Two.

Chairman **Miller**. Two bedrooms.

Ms. **Epps**. Um-hm.

Chairman **Miller**. I see.

Cardozo also has an infant program where some students can bring the newborn children; is that correct?

Ms. **Epps**. Yes.

Chairman **Miller**. When you talk to your friends, do you think that has been helpful in keeping them at school, having that program available?

Ms. **Epps**. Yes; because most of us, they would have had to drop out if there was not something.

Chairman **Miller**. Because there is no one to care for the infant?

Ms. **Epps**. Right.

Chairman **Miller**. Do you know how many students have children in the infant program?

Ms. **Epps**. I guess it is about 12, 13.

Chairman **Miller**. Do other students help take care of those children? Is that part of the schooling, too?

Ms. **Epps**. Sometimes.

Chairman **Miller**. That is interesting.

Fred, let me ask you something. With the families that you work with and some of the children that are victims of violent situations or broken homes, what is the biggest deficiency in those families?

Mr. **Taylor**. How do you mean, deficiency?

Chairman **Miller**. What is it that really is, in your mind, lacking in that family? Is it money? Is there substance abuse? Obviously, all the families have different situations, but in terms of really shaking the foundation of those family units?

Mr. Taylor. A major problem is isolation. The families are not meaningfully connected anywhere. Then when stress accumulates, the frustrations have to go somewhere, and often that is toward the most defenseless one in the space, that is, a child.

Situations of child abuse or neglect contain many factors; however, affordable housing is critical, because if the family is up against whether they will be in the same place from month to month, the pressure is destructive. Moreover, family members need a network of relationships in order to balance their dependency on each other. Isolated families who are constantly moving from one temporary place to another are like time bombs.

Chairman Miller. You think that there is clearly a general environmental pressure of being a poor family, whether it is inadequate housing or small housing or the tensions of many people living together under the same roof?

The previous witnesses also talked a great deal about the isolation in terms of not really knowing your neighbors or being able to rely on them to help you from time to time.

Is that true, Joe, in the families that you see, also?

Mr. Citro. I think that Fred really hit the nail on the head when he said that what the families need is support. We know that there are poor families who are able to at least get through without any very serious problems in raising their children, apart from the problems of really finding what they need. But, I mean, in a situation like Ana's situation, she has children who are good children, and she has a husband who is a good husband, and they are trying very, very hard with a few resources to have a good family.

I think one of the reasons they can is because they get help from other families. At the Family Place, what we try to do is have people help each other. In our daily enrichment activity, people come on by. They can come anytime they want during the day, they sit down and they talk with each other. We have discussions with—there is a participants council that is elected by the participants. We want people to help each other, because that is what it is all about.

And we also want them to become independent. But I think that if a family is in crisis, and they know that crisis is being shared by other people, they are better able to deal with it.

Chairman Miller. It is just interesting. We all sit in the Congress, and a lot of times when you are sitting on the floor, other Members of Congress will tell you what is going on in their family and the troubles they are having, and they do not know what to do. But if nothing else, I guess you can find another Member of Congress on the floor to sort of chat with and to talk it over with.

But what is becoming clear here is the inability of poor families to have that same opportunity available to them.

Stephanie, do you think you are going to be able to find a place to live on your own, to move out in a relatively short period of time, given the fact that you are in school, and have two sons?

Is that something you would like to be able to do?

Ms. Epps. Yes, I would. I am hoping soon that I would be able to get a place of my own, because it is just simply overcrowded.

Chairman **Miller**. How big is the apartment that Ana lives in, Joe? Can you ask her?

Mr. **Citro**. She has a living room and one bedroom. All five of them sleep in the same bedroom.

Chairman **Miller**. So there again, we see the same situation.

When she was working as a domestic, was she sending some of her money to El Salvador for her other son?

Mr. **Citro**. Yes, she did.

She was sending $200 a month back to her son in El Salvador.

Chairman **Miller**. How long has her husband been working as a busboy?

Mr. **Citro**. For 6 years.

Chairman **Miller**. So she has been separated from her two sons in Salvador most of their life?

Mr. **Citro**. Yes. One son she left when he was less than 1 year old, when she came here. The other son, he was born here, but then she became pregnant at that time. In order for her just to survive, she had to send the other son back.

She recently brought one son here. And the last son has—one son just came this year just for 2 months now in this country.

Chairman **Miller**. What would you think, and I am not looking for a hard number, but just in terms of families that come to you with these kinds of pressures, what do you think your ability to achieve some success in terms of—really just talking about maintenance at this point—but keeping them from making the wrong decision and throwing up their hands?

Mr. **Citro**. I think that what we have to do is look at families, every family, as having certain strengths as well as certain weaknesses. And what we try to do at the Family Place is build on the strengths of the families, because poor families are strong families, too. Not all of them, but a number of them are, and the families that we work with, we try to capitalize on those strengths.

Ana comes with a tremendous desire. She is just an example I am using of a parent who wants to—as we have heard from Stephanie as well, and Ayo—of a parent who wants to be a good parent, who wants to take care of that child, who wants to do the best for the 4 children or the 10 children or 1 child.

And I believe we could be successful, actually, with all the families that we deal with, except those, I think, who are having some real difficult problem, I mean, who really are mentally ill. I think that that is a very special case. I think that families who are drug abusers or alcohol abusers, you are dealing with the special cases there.

But a family who wants to make it and who reaches out and can give and is willing to try and get support. I mean, you know, these families cannot do it on their own. They need the support of the Government. They need the support of city programs, especially to provide things like day care.

The day-care centers tell us, if you want your child in to a day-care center, come when you are pregnant. One of our women went when she was 3 months pregnant. The child is now 3½ years old, and last week got into the daycare program. Especially bilingual daycare programs, which not only in this city, but throughout the country, are really—we need daycare training programs that will operate in the evening.

There needs to be proper health care for children, because poor families simply do not have that kind of money to provide the health care that is required.

But if we could get those kinds of supports for families, we could build on the strength of families. We could build on the social services system that we have, and that is even in place. Family Place does not cost a lot of money. It is a low-cost program that builds on the strengths of families and uses people to help each other.

I think that we could do it for a lot of families.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

Ron.

Mr. **Dellums**. I have no questions at this particular time.

Chairman **Miller**. Ham.

Mr. **Fish**. No, thank you.

Chairman **Miller**. Well, let me again thank you on behalf of the committee for sharing your experiences with us. You may have something else you want to add or comment on. Feel free to do that. I really want to thank you because I just think it is terribly, terribly important that those of us in the Congress start to understand not only the problems that confront families in poverty but I would hope also that my colleagues in the Congress would start to appreciate the strengths of these families.

I do not know many people that could endure this kind of day-today, hour-to-hour pressure. And I really hope that as people read this transcript, and as we start to share it with other people in Congress, and as the committee continues, we ought to realize that in many ways these families have been successful.

I suspect that very often the notion that we should dwell on successes in the ghetto or among the impoverished sometimes is a notion of success that is not realistic for others. But these are related successes. The fact that Stephanie can stay in school, raise two sons with the help of her family, that her grandmother would give up that kind of time, that she is willing to get up at 2:30 in the morning; Ayo, who made a decision to get off of drugs; that young Michael made a decision not to get on drugs; that Aletha is prepared to walk several miles a day to take care of her family; that Ana is sharing the bedroom with five other members of her family so she and her husband have no privacy—those are success stories.

That is not the American dream, but we ought not to mix the two of them up together. I would just hope that the Members of Congress would start to focus on that because I do not know whether any of my colleagues could endure that kind of pressure on a daily basis.

I think it was Tweedy who said she works for $4 an hour and it costs her $4.80 just in carfare to get back and forth to work. She has to work better than an hour just to get to her job. I think for Members of Congress, we have to work somewhere around 3 minutes to pay that carfare.

And that is one of the ways we judge standard of living in this country. How many hours for a loaf of bread, how many hours for shelter, how many hours for clothing. So I would hope that some of my colleagues who are constantly telling us to look at the success stories might understand that success is relative to the environment in which you are trying to survive.

And I have visited with a number of young women who have given birth to children, who are staying in school in this city, in my district, and in other parts of the country. And I just wish Members of Congress would see the kind of commitment that those young mothers have to those children, and to understand it. And I would also hope that this hearing would be the beginning of understanding that very often, we find that our policies at the Federal level are inconsistent with rational maternal decisions about the care of a child. Because we cannot provide day care, because we do not provide health care, it is not a good maternal decision to go to work and lose those benefits, and lose that kind of support system for a family. We force people to chose between an economic priority and a maternal priority, when in fact people ought to be able to work to provide for their children and still afford health care and still be able to find affordable, safe child care.

So, again, I want to thank you, and I would hope that as we revisit this whole issue of families and children in poverty, that we can come forward with a more humane policy, with a more comprehensive policy, and understand the bankruptcy of the current policy, which is to continue to deny those support resources to these families who are struggling this hard on a day-to-day basis to get by.

This is the first in a series of hearings that we are going to embark on. I want to thank all of the members of the committee who appeared at various times this morning, and to my dear friend, Ron Dellums, for sparking this initiative again.

I was hoping that the committee somehow would not have to get back into an issue that we had so exhaustively engaged in 2 years ago, but it is clear the situation is getting no better. In fact, it is deteriorating at an accelerating pace for millions of Americans. So I want to thank all of my colleagues.

Mr. DELLUMS. Would the gentleman yield briefly?

Chairman MILLER. Yes.

Mr. DELLUMS. Let me just say first that I appreciate the fact that you are holding these hearings, and I am proud to be your friend and to be your colleague.

Poverty is increasing in this country and misery is mounting to an extraordinary level. I just think that it has achieved a point where it is a moral imperative that we eradicate poverty in this country.

I also believe that we can rally this country to eradicate poverty. I have to believe that. And it seems to me that a nation which cannot rally to its children is a nation in serious difficulty. I think we can win this fight politically, and I am very pleased that you started in Washington, DC. I hope you take these hearings all over the country, force American people to realize what we are doing in the name of American conservative politics. We are destroying human beings in this society in the name of deficit reduction and balanced budget.

In some kind of way, if we put 10 percent of the energy into eradicating poverty that we appear to be putting into eradicating the deficit, we could deal with this problem. I think if you take this hearing around the country, politicize America and mobilize America, and I think, George, that it can be done, because I believe America can deal with it.

The one fleeting moment where I felt some sense of optimism was the other day when I was watching—the other night, as you know, ABC did a few nights where they focused on the issue of poverty among children. And there were a number of scenes and vignettes that were extraordinary to me. I just happened to be sitting in my bedroom alone when the program was on, and one young, 9-year-old black child was asked to describe the nature of his existence. And he laid that out. And then the woman said, well, how do you feel about that.

And then this magnificent, beautiful child, said, I feel like killing myself.

And all I could do was sit there in the silence of my room and cry and feel an incredible sense of impotence.

I went to the floor the next day, and I gave a 1-minute speech where I said that we have to address these problems. The fleeting moment of optimism that I felt was that the gallery, the people who were visiting the Congress, applauded that 1-minute speech. I did not take that personally, because I looked up there, and that was middle America; it was not Berkeley, CA, applauding the speech. It was middle-of-the-road, middle America right down the pike.

And it seemed to me that for a fleeting moment, those people heard what I said and that there are millions of other American people who would hear, because we have to eradicate poverty among the children. I think our society will clearly begin to understand that once you make a commitment to eradicate poverty among children, you cannot stop until you eradicate poverty among all of our citizens.

I think it is an imperative. I thank you for doing this. I hope that you are aggressive. I hope that both members of the Democratic and Republican Party would join across the lines that tend to divide us, to come together around our kids.

As I said before, and I am going to keep on saying it, a society that threatens its children is a society on its way to dying. And I believe that this society has to live and that we have to go forward to do that, to address the problems of our children.

Take it out there and take it aggressively, and I think you can mobilize America.

Thank you.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

Yes?

Mr. **Taylor**. Just some brief comments?

Chairman **Miller**. Mr. Taylor.

Mr. **Taylor**. I am saying this as a private citizen, and as a person involved in human service as a life vocation.

I think it is critical that this country look at what each level of society has the capability of doing. For example there are a lot of things that we can do at the local level, but federally-based entitlements such as food stamps, AFDC, et cetera have to stay in place for us at the local level to get at the other problems. I think the time has come for some clearly delineated roles for national, State, and local levels as regards coping with poverty. Together we can make a real difference in this situation; however, there is no way this country can reduce or even contain poverty without a strong mix of Federal, State, and local initiative.

Thank you.

Chairman **Miller**. Thank you.

This committee stands adjourned.

Thank you very much.

[Whereupon, at 11:35 a.m., the committee was adjourned.]

[Material submitted for inclusion in the record follows:]

FRIENDSHIP HOUSE
619 D STREET, S.E.
Washington, D.C. 20003
675-9050

Established in 1904

Friendship House Fact Sheet

Friendship House is in your community to serve **YOU**. If our staff can't help you with a problem, we probably know someone who can. Here's what we offer:

Clothing Center
400 L Street, S.E.
Director: Mr. James Beale
Phone: 675-9240 or 9241

Need Good Clothing? The Friendship House Clothing Center has good used clothing for men, women and children. The clothing is donated from throughout the metropolitan area by individuals, agencies and businesses and is available free. If you need clothing or have some clothes to donate, please contact the Center between 9:00 a.m. and 4:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Child Development Center

619 D Street, S.E.
Director: Ms. Teresa Buck
Phone: 675-9064

Additional Site
1720 Minnesota Ave., S.E.
. . . priority given to children who reside east of the Anacostia River.

The Centers Provide Educational Programs for children ages 2 to 14. Priority is given to mothers who are working or in job training. Fees are based on a sliding scale determined by family income. Hours of operation are 7:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m., Monday through Friday.

A full-time Developmental Teacher assists the teaching staff in planning a stimulating and individualized educational program designed to meet the intellectual, physical, social and emotional needs of each child. Major emphasis is placed on enhancing each child's sense of self-worth, confidence, and independence.

Active **parent involvement** is an essential component of our program, including monthly Parent Meetings, family outings, and parent-teacher conferences.

Our school age program provides a wide variety of enrichment activities before and after school and full time during the summer.

Services to the Elderly

619 D Street, S.E.
Director: Ms. Jean Morisey
Phone: 675-9075 or 9076

If you are a **senior citizen** or know an elderly person, we provide **nutritious** and **balanced** meals every weekday at the seven locations listed below. We provide some transportation to the sites and deliver a limited number of meals to homebound seniors. Senior Citizens may contribute as they are able.

Meal Sites

— Christ Methodist Church, 900 4th St., S.W.
— Arthur Capper, 601 L St., S.E.
— Potomac Gardens, 1229 G St., S.E.
— Purity Baptist, 1325 Maryland Ave., N.E.
— Capitol Hill Towers, 900 G St., N.E.
— St. Monica's, 1340 Massachusetts Ave., S.E.
— Holy Name Church, 920 11th St., N.E.

We also provide **supportive services** such as escort assistance, counseling, advocacy, shopping assistance, information sessions as well as **recreational** activities like bowling, trips, outings and games. A new fully staffed **senior center** located at our Arthur Capper site, provides additional services which include health and dental care, beautician services, arts and crafts, and cooking classes. We distribute Metro Passes and will help seniors apply for Medicaid, Food Stamps, Supplemental Security Income (SSI) and housing. Hours for these services are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Community Organization Unit

1000 5th Street, S.E.
Director: Ms. Vivian Williams
Phone: 675-9243

Having Trouble Coping with PMA? Friendship House staff works closely with Tenant Councils in Arthur Capper, Carrolsburg, and Ellen Wilson dwellings on maintenance, security and other problems.

Come by or call the C.O. Unit between 9:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

Energy Program

619 D Street, S.E.
Director: Mr. C. David Alter
Phone: 675-9069

If you are a senior citizen or low or moderate income, you may qualify for free home weatherization service. We train young people in weatherization skills and hire them to use their expertise in the homes of elderly residents in the city. Energy conservation information and technical assistance in energy-related problems are also available.

Psycho-Social Unit

1526 Pennsylvania Avenue, S.E.
Director: Ms. Felicia Nokes
Phone: 544-1811 or 544-1228

Friendship House operates a community-based mental health program for psychiatrically disabled clients referred from community mental health centers of the D.C. Mental Health Services Administration.

The program provides daily, productive activities designed to improve clients' competencies in personal, social, educational, recreational, and vocational areas to enable them to independently function effectively in the community.

Manpower Services

619 D Street, S.E.
Director: Ms. Deborah Walsh
Phone: 675-9068

This unit provides a comprehensive Manpower Services program geared toward employability development. Services include:

job search, recruitment, training, information and referral, placement and follow-up for area applicants.

Cooperating Services

Food Stamp Office

619 D Street, S.E.
Phone: 675-9080 or 9081

— **Food Stamp Certifiers are available**. You can apply at 619 D Street, S.E. Monday through Friday 8:15 a.m. to 4:45 p.m.

— **Alcoholics Anonymous Meetings** are held at Friendship House, 619 D Street, S.E. every Tuesday and Thursday at 8:00 p.m. For information, please contact Mr. James Beale, 675-9240 or 9241.

To Our Friends

This Fact Sheet outlines Friendship House programs and services. Our dedicated staff and Board of Directors work hard to instill our motto of hope and self-sufficiency to the large population of clients that we serve. We invite you to stop by or call and ask questions about Friendship House. We're always glad to help.

Clyde B. Richardson
President, *Board of Directors*

Administrative Staff

Executive Director — Beryl C. Johnson

Research Director — Charlotte Ehrenhaft

Youth Unit

619 D Street, S.E.
Coordinator: Mr. Walter Sullivan
Phone: 675-9069

Our youth services focus on employment readiness and job experience, educational support, and provision of a range of leisure time activities. Earn while you learn in our Odd Job Registry and Summer Youth Employment Programs.

Additional activities for youth include tutoring and educational support, individual counseling, and summer resident camp experiences. Computer classes are available for both youth and adults. Try us!

Consumer Action Unit

1011 7th Street, S.E.
Director: Ms. Beatrice Gray
Phone: 675-9084 or 9085

Need Help With cutting food costs? Our Consumer Unit holds food demonstrations and provides counseling for consumer problems.

For individuals and families with **emergency food** needs because of fire, theft, or other crises, we provide free food collected from churches and agencies around the area.

Hours of the Consumer Action Unit are 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday.

PART OF THE SENIOR SERVICE NETWORK —
SUPPORTED BY THE D. C. OFFICE ON AGING

Name ______________________________

Address ______________________________

City ______________ State ______________ Zip ______________

☐ Yes, I want to become a FRIEND OF FRIENDSHIP HOUSE by supporting your many essential services. Enclosed is my tax deductible contribution.

☐ $500 ☐ $250 ☐ $100 ☐ $50 ☐ $25 ☐ $10 ______________ Other

$10 — Will help buy art supplies and learning tools for our Day Care Program.

$25 — Will provide information pamphlets on health services, crime prevention, and tenant's rights and responsibilities.

$50 — Pays for trade school and vocational training for clients in our Psycho-Social Rehabilitation Program.

$100 — Will provide emergency food for needy and hungry families in our community.

$250 — Pays for summer trips and leisure time activities for senior's in our Services to the Elderly Program.

$500 — Will pay for computer instruction and training for community youth.

Prepared Statement of Lorrie Williams, Center for Youth Services Member

Not Another Statistic

My life at the Center for Youth Services (CYS) started in October, 1983. When I started, I was confused, ready to give up, and on the verge of destruction. I went through a number of jobs with no success. Forced to apply for welfare, because of a lack of skills and education, as well as money, I was branded with the label "single teenage mother (parent)" and to the Government and the world I became another statistic- single, young, Black and uneducated. Like a fortune teller reading your palm, the government had read my life. It predicted I would be another uneducated Black female welfare recipient who had babies and would stay at home and watch soap operas all day. But, determined to become just the opposite, I began my journey. Little did I know my journey would lead me to CYS, my first stop toward a brighter future. The tools CYS has given me, and continues to give me, are exactly what I needed. There was no need for me to journey any further.

The director, my primary counselor, and staff are so dedicated to their jobs. A lot of time and energy has to go into what they are doing. Dedication and determination are the key words and strengths for them.

A lot of time when you are growing up there's something you are lacking. For the fortunate ones, they can overcome their lacking, but for the less fortunate ones, we tend to put the missing pieces together. We go on our journey to find the missing pieces. This can cause problems.

For me, my sole reason for having a baby at a young age was for love and security, because I was lacking these things. When you are searching for something and you can't find what you are looking for, you begin to substitute until you can put the pieces in the right place, and until you get the right ingredients.

The period of being a teenager and a young adult is not an easy one. Some people are more successful than others. Somethings that are simple for us are difficult for others. All of us have unique needs, but our youth especially have unique needs. It is important that they have someone (a second family) to boost them up even though most of the time they have families already. A "second family" is like a second reinforcement. This is the role of CYS in its members' lives; when CYS can offer education, employment, counselling, daycare, medical and pregnancy care, and family crisis services, this makes a difference in their lives. Just the idea of knowing that there's someone else who cares, and shows it, makes a difference.

A good example of this is my life and family, especially my brother Chris. My brother got involved in CYS through the court system. He was going through CYS for education and counselling. Through him, I found out about CYS. I was reluctant at first, but he kept pressuring me, so I decided to give it a shot. Little did I know that this very special gift that my brother gave me would be extremely significant to me in less than two years.

Fortunately, I was able to get my GED and attend a word-processing training class successfully. But unfortunately, my brother was murdered 7 months ago. A lot of our goals we were going to obtain together, and because of his death we could not do so. My family sort of withdrew from each other. It was hard for us to talk about our pain and heartache. CYS and my primary counselor helped me through this nightmare! For them to be there for my family and me at a time like that was a blessing, because they asked for nothing in retur except love and togetherness. They helped me, and still are helping me to cope with his death, to talk about and understand what happened and why. Without this I know I would have had a nervous breakdown. They helped me to be strong for my brother, and my family.

I cannot express how very important it is to have someplace, another home, to turn to in any crisis, or any time. I have talked to many people who say they wished they had CYS around when they were growing up, because they probably would be a lot better off.

We have a remarkable family that continues to grow; as my primary counselor says, CYS members are all over the place. It's like a cousin you may have and would not have known until you started talking about your family and you find out you stem from some of the same roots.

PREPARED STATEMENT OF NANCY DAY

Good morning. I am Nancy Day, a divorced mother with three children ages 9, 15 and 18. Presently, we are a publicly-assisted family with an income of less than $500 a month. This includes a check and food stamps.

Until going on public assistance several years ago, I was a working mother. Before my divorce, a fulltime stay-at-home mother. Therefore, I can relate to the problems and concerns of the working poor, social service clients and to the single parent household. At this time, however, I would like to focus on the problems of the single parent publicly-assisted household.

After quitting work due to health reasons, I started receiving public assistance. Going from working full time to public assistance took a lot of adjusting, not only from me but from my children. Because we could not afford the rent on our apartment, we were forced to move into a public housing unit.

In our old neighborhood, everybody watched out for everyone else's children and property. At the development I am living in now, neighbors watch other people destroy your property and break into your home. Neighbors that are trying to do the best they can and live respectful lives are afraid to call the police in the event they see someone being beaten because threats are often made against them and their families. Therefore, certain people within and outside the development are permitted to do as they wish.

In my development, maintenance, if done at all, is done only after getting landlord/tenant affairs involved. In my unit, a smoke detector that went on the blink months ago is yet to be replaced. A so-called energy saver coil type overhead light in my kitchen (which would cost me $15 if purchased myself) has not been replaced. However, I have been told by management that these lights were their responsibility to replace.

Appliances in my unit and a number of others need to be and have been promised to be replaced. They have not. Some units have ceilings and floors that were in need of repairs for several years before they were repaired. At this time, I am not sure all have. I have tried to get management to help put together a parenting skills group and other workshops needed in my community, but have not been able to get their help in doing so.

The environment change has greatly influenced my children. They are made fun of because they have curfews. The name "sissy" is called to my 9 year old when he tells the other kids he can't come out because his mother won't let him. Preschool and elementary children are seen in the company of adults with cans of beer. These same kids have mouths on them that sailors would be ashamed of.

As mentioned before, my household has an income of less than $500 a month. The food stamp allotment provides $1.00 per day for each family member. The check covers rent, telephone and car insurance. It is also used to purchase household cleaning and paper supplies, the cost of doing laundry and personal hygienne articles. That is just about as far as it will go.

The car, therefore, is used once a month for shopping and necessary trips for medical service. If car repairs are needed, it may sit for months while money is saved for parts. This applies to minor repairs -- major repairs are out of the question for the social service client.

Being human means more than having a human body, it means having options, being able to create, to build, to choose, to reject. What you do as a human being defines who you are, what makes you unique among others, and defines the quality of your life experiences.

Social service clients do not agree with this statement. You mention to someone that you are a social service client and all of a sudden you become less than human. People have a tendency to think you have no worth at all. Not only does this come from middle-class citizens (who are oftentimes one pay check away from being in the same position themselves), but from people that are supposed to be helping the client get back into the working world.

Clients are having problems with the WIN staff (Maryland). They are calling in tears because of the insensitivity of staff members. They are so discouraged by the treatment received that they just throw up their hands and say "why bother?"

Clients remain on the social service rolls because they are not getting the guidance they need. Many people on social service need someone to help in goal setting skills and how to reach those goals. Granted, there is a small percentage of clients who like sitting home waiting for that check each month, but a larger percentage would rather be working.

There are a number of reasons why people are on public assistance. It does not mean that we are lazy, good-for-nothings, which is one of the labels given to social service clients. One phrase I have learned to hate with a passion is "you people."

[illegible]ts of social service supported children are found sitting [illegible] in front of a television (if they are lucky enough to have [illegible] [illegible]st looking at four walls. Not out of choice, but because they cannot do anything else. There is no money in the budget for taking a class, for self improvement, bus fare to the library (for books to read), the daily newspaper, decent clothes to wear. We can't invite a friend for lunch (most parents don't eat lunch so that the food will last longer for the children). If not for the school breakfast and lunch programs, very few social service children would have more than one meal a day.

Social service clients and working poor people are all screaming for a little guidance and support. Tell us how to better ourselves and hold our hand while we are doing it. Most of us have come from backgrounds that did not enable us to learn how to interact with people or teach us goal setting and decision-making skills.

Social service clients do not have options to choose or reject because they receive a check and food stamps each month. This option is no longer theirs. The rules and regulations of the social service system keep them on public assistance.

Things needed to help low income people at this time are an increase in the income eligibility for medical assistance to enable the working poor to have better preventive medical care, and provision of preventive dental service for persons over 21 on medical assistance.

When applying for public assistance, the intake worker completes the paperwork, barely acknowledging the fact you are there except to ask a question. If you are found eligible, you are assigned a caseworker. You have no contact with this worker unless your check or food stamps is not received in an orderly fashion. I believe that the workers should have resources available such as information on job training and other events that may help the client in making some adjustments in their lives to shorten their stay on public assistance.

Definitely, an issue I would like to see dealt with is the fact that when a student reaches 16 years of age the school system has no legal way to help the parent keep that student in school. I am finding that a lot of young adults are spending their days sitting on fences, drinking and using drugs which were bought with money stolen from neighbor's homes and businesses because they cannot read and write. Therefore, they cannot work. For that reason, changes should be made on the state and federal level that would not permit students to drop out of school at 16.

Thank you for your time.

Prepared Statement of Katherine Ferrell, Kenilworth Parkside Resident Management Corp.

4500 QUARLES STREET N.E.
WASHINGTON D.C. 20019
(202) 399-4477

CHILDREN IN POVERTY

Three years ago, Kenilworth/Parkside was considered as Public Housing, it was a diaster heat and hot water were the assets, not the rule. The most routine maintenance was neglected, vandalism and resident abuse made maintenance pointless.

As a community 85 percent of the residents relied chiefly on government subsidy (AFDC), and teenage pregnacy was rampant. In 1982 the resident of the Kenilworth/Parkside Development decided that the living conditions had crossed into the intolerable zone. We formed our own Management Corporation, elected a Board of Director from among the residents and convinced the city to let us manage the development.

Within two years we radically improved the living conditions, restored rarely heat and hot water, patch leaking roofs and other gross physical defects. One of the major advantages of Resident Management is the sense of community that its builds. When there is no hot water or heat on the property the Manager and the Maintenance Foreman heat and hot water is also off.

There are 464 units within the Kenilworth/Parkside Community. We have started several small businesses such as:

1. Coop Store
2. Day Care Center
3. Beauty & Barber Shop
4. Thrift Store
5. Boutique (Alterations and Hand sewn clothes)

We have also established a Health Center with a full time doctor, Employment Center, Voc-Rehab Counciling, College Here We Come Program, Resident Maintenance Training Program and Recreation Programs evenings and afternoons.

This new attitude has inspired many residents to seek a better way of living for themselves and their chidlren. Since Resident Management, many resident have become active in PTA meetings and the Neighborhood Advisory Council. Another major benefit of Resident Management has been to college programs, College Here We Come is a non-profit program design to assist Public Housing youths to gain access to post seconaary education. The College Here We Come program has sent over 500 youth to colleges all over the United States. Many of the graduates have come back as architects, teachers and many other professions that are need in our community. This for the first time has inspired many youth that have never been and could not afford to go to college to go and seek further education. Resident Management , I feel is the primary reason for self/help mentality. We have been able to accomplish many of these goals with very little help from Local or Federal funds. Giving the opportunity to manage ourselves has created a Healthy anu Prosperous Community.

Remarks of Congressman Dan Coats, a Representative in Congress From the State of Indiana, and Ranking Minority Member, Select Committee on Children, Youth, and Families

While recent Census Bureau Statistics show that the poverty rate among all children fell in 1984 (from 22.2% to 21.3%) and that the national poverty rate also fell (to 14.4%), it is disturbing to any concerned citizen that half the black children under 6 were poor and nearly 40% of Hispanic children under 18 were poor.

In a period of general economic recovery we need to examine why some have been left behind. The personal testimony of the individuals was very moving, and my heart goes out to those who are struggling valiantly to succeed as citizens and parents.

I feel we also need to thoroughly examine several larger questions as well. Here are a few statistics from one report, the CRS Children in Poverty report, that nearly jump off the page:

- More than 70% of children with never married mothers (black, white, or Hispanic) were below the poverty level. Compared with a white child, a black child was almost 12 times as likely to have a never married mother.

- 40% of children whose father and mother both failed to complete high school have children who are poor, but only 7% of those children whose parents each received a diploma are poor.

- When AFDC was enacted, 88% of families that received State welfare were needy because the father had died. By March, 1983 more than 88% of the children had able-bodied but absent fathers; futhermore, the fathers of 47% of AFDC children were not married to their mother.

No one could hear or read the testimony of these witnesses or talk with others in similar situations and not be touched. But the real question is how to best help poor families. A critical part of what to do is defining the problem or problems specifically enough to target solutions.

Federal government programs have been of only subsistence level help; it appears, at least in some cases, to have aggravated the problem. That does not give us the right to give up, however. Rather it should challenge us to be more creative in what we do and also acknowledge that the federal government alone cannot solve these problems.

I have included several articles that address various aspects of the larger problem--attitudes, family composition, education, and some new program ideas.

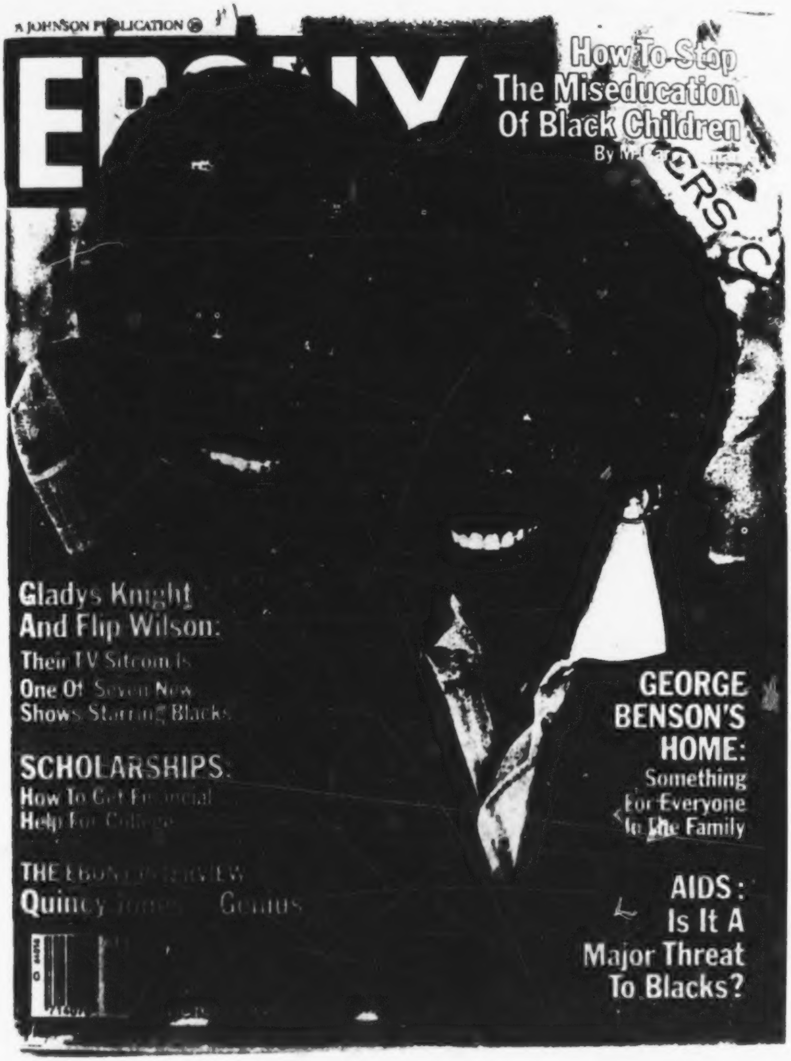
Columnist William Raspberry summarized the article by M. Carl Holman this way: "They (black children) are, he says quietly, in trouble and slipping academically to the point where a shocking percentage of the next generation will be economically expendable, not because of racism, but because they will lack the skills to compete in the labor market."

The question is not natural ability but being able to develop that ability to compete in a free economy. Two innovative young black leaders, Harvard Economic Professor, Glenn Loury, and Robert L. Woodson, the dynamic leader of the National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, have done much work in this area.

I have included for the record a recent paper titled "The Role of the Family: An Overview" by Glenn Loury that was done for the November Executive Session II on "Delinquency and the Family", a project of the Department of Juvenile Justice and the John F. Kennedy School of Government at Harvard University. While it is specifically oriented toward delinquency (only one issue affected by the family) it is an excellent example of how the family needs to be included in discussions about what to do.

"Helping the Poor Help Themselves" by Bob Woodson is an overview of some ideas he and others have observed or suggested.

If as a Committee we pursue this subject further, I am looking forward to hearing more from these leaders and others who are working toward solutions to the sad personal stories highlighted at this hearing.



A JOHNSON PUBLICATION

EBONY

How To Stop The Miseducation Of Black Children

By [illegible]

Gladys Knight And Flip Wilson: Their TV Sitcom Is One Of Seven New Shows Starring Blacks

SCHOLARSHIPS: How To Get Financial Help For College

THE EBONY INTERVIEW Quincy Jones — Genius

GEORGE BENSON'S HOME: Something For Everyone In The Family

AIDS: Is It A Major Threat To Blacks?

How To Stop The Miseducation Of Black Children

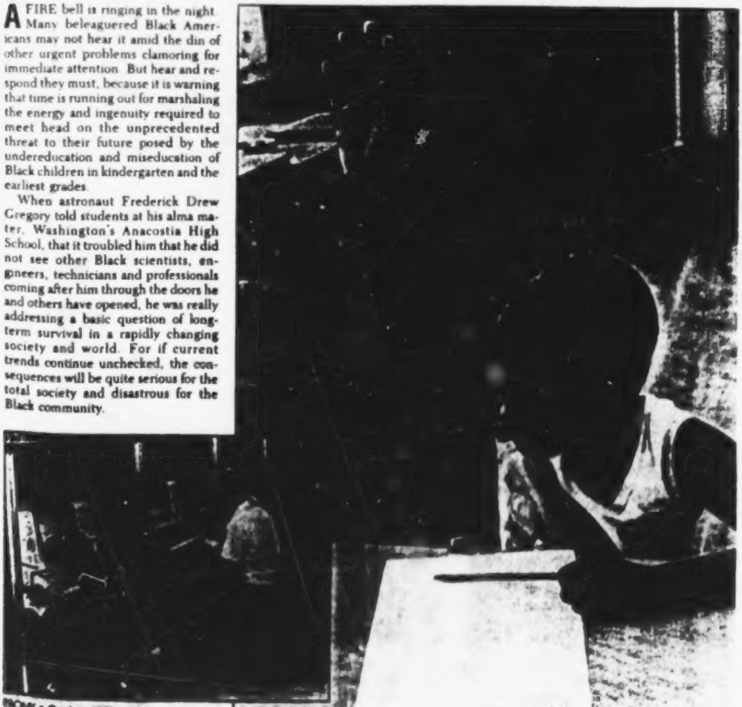
Kindergarten, earliest grades are key years

By M. Carl Holman

President, National Urban Coalition

A FIRE bell is ringing in the night. Many beleaguered Black Americans may not hear it amid the din of other urgent problems clamoring for immediate attention. But hear and respond they must, because it is warning that time is running out for marshaling the energy and ingenuity required to meet head on the unprecedented threat to their future posed by the undereducation and miseducation of Black children in kindergarten and the earliest grades.

When astronaut Frederick Drew Gregory told students at his alma mater, Washington's Anacostia High School, that it troubled him that he did not see other Black scientists, engineers, technicians and professionals coming after him through the doors he and others have opened, he was really addressing a basic question of long-term survival in a rapidly changing society and world. For if current trends continue unchecked, the consequences will be quite serious for the total society and disastrous for the Black community.



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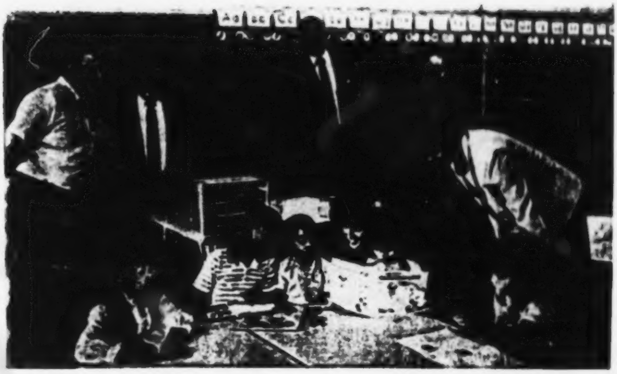
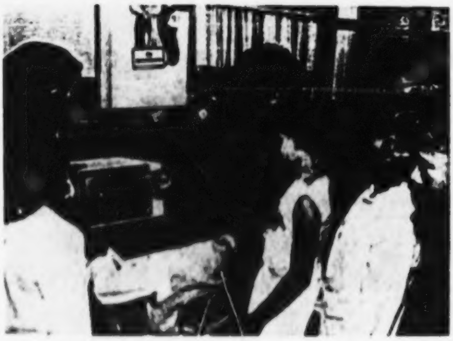


Dr James Comer (2nd from l.), director of the Yale Child Study Center, and Martin Luther King Elementary School Principal Edward J. Ferrucci (l.) observe as children, parents and teachers take part in summer program in Hartford, Conn. At Chicago's Bryn Mawr School (below) teacher Rosa L. Watts conducts a summer program computer course for youngsters.

STOP MISEDUCATION *Continued*



According to almost all experts, Blacks are taking in the early grades fewer of the basic courses necessary for developing the skills, study habits and content required to excel in science, math and technology in the intermediate, high school and college years. To make matters worse, the enrollment of Black students in colleges is declining, in part because of cutbacks in federal aid to education.

The figures are clear and compelling. Blacks and Hispanics, representing about 18.5 percent of the total population, received only 7.3 percent of the bachelor's degrees awarded in the biological sciences in 1980-81, and only 5.8 percent of the degrees in physical science. At the master's degree level, they received 3.34 percent of the degrees in biological science and 3.34 percent of the physical science degrees. At the doctoral level, minorities received a dismal 0.9 percent of the degrees in the physical sciences and 1.52 percent of the life science doctorates.

To meet this challenge, and to ensure the future of our children and our children's children, we must mobilize all our forces and begin again at the beginning, in the preschool and elementary school, to educate our children for technological survival and maximum economic self-sufficiency.

As in the case of most of the painful breaking of ground and sowing of seeds in the 1950s and earlier, which led to the civil rights revolution of the '60s, much of the work to be done will have to be done by Blacks themselves. Despite the clear evidence of demographics which show how short-sighted any national blueprint for the future will prove to be which ignores the critical need to build on the essential human capital bases which minorities and females represent, the signs are not terribly encouraging. There are already indications that poor and predominantly Black schools are being shortchanged in the allocation of computers and computer programs. So, with all due respect to all the valuable allies we have had and now have, we cannot expect George to do it. Certainly in every urban community there are enough Black churches, clubs, fraternities, sororities, fraternal orders and auxiliaries, business and professional groups to provide the help minority children, parents and schools so badly need.

Nor can we allow the current and understandable focus on improving high school education and upon remediation to deter us from moving to a much stronger focus on *preventive* education. Which means intervening as early as we can, and with as much creativity and continuity as we can bring to bear, on motivating and educating Black youngsters in what they must know, do and believe in their formative years. It is not a question of either/or. Remediation at the upper levels is necessary. But as a strategy for

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the '90s and beyond : will prove woefully inadequate.

Consider what we know. We know that Black children are closest to their White age peers in their earlidst years and that, given half a chance, these children are eager and responsive learners. But we also know that the learning gap widens in every year after kindergarten. That by almost every measure the roots of failure take hold long before thousands of minority youngsters have dropped out or have been pushed out of high school. Or emerge with virtually worthless certificates or diplomas.

We will also have to look more rationally at the real options now open to Black children. Alternative schools — some of them at least — are fine. Private and parochial schools are fine when they admit in any real numbers the kinds of children we are talking about. Magnet schools and other desegregated schools can work well, especially when staffs are sensitive and committed.

But the harsh fact is that today hundreds of thousands of low-income Black youngsters, particularly at the elementary level, will find themselves in school rooms where very few young faces will be of a color different from their own. Most of these classrooms will be in publicly-supported schools—at a time when public support is not very freely given.

Any strategy for dealing with the education of anything other than a Black elite must take these schools into account. Just as it must factor in both the especially gifted Black youngsters, whatever the income levels of their parents, as well as those average Black students who must not go on scoring below the average for their age groups.

You do not have to believe everything you read about the widening gap between the Black middle class and the "underclass" to know that what needs to be done is not easy. And you have only to visit a few schools in the inner reaches of our cities to come across three reasons for frustration or despair for every signal flag of hope you encounter.

But the flags are there. Much of the credit is due to a new breed of urban school superintendents — many of them Black or Hispanic — who are establishing beachheads of improved achievement, with the help of some committed principals and teachers. And some pioneering low-income parents.

Women and men like Floretta Dukes McKenzie of Washington, D.C., Constance Clayton of Philadelphia, Alonzo Crim of Atlanta, Willie Herenton of Memphis, James Vasquez of San Antonio, Dorothy Maggett of Tucson, Arthur Jefferson of Detroit, Lee McMurrin of Milwaukee, Jerome Jones of Saint Louis and a half dozen other urban superintendents are tapping the resources of school staffs, students, parents, business and community leaders to produce not only hard-won changes in attitudes and perceptions, but solid, measurable improvements in achievement.

In one midwestern inner-city elementary school, low-income Black children win prizes in the citywide science fair each year, and one fifth grade youngster scored at the 97th percentile on standardized tests, averaging at 10.5, with 12.4 grade level scores on some elements of the test. Certainly, he and others like him are exceptional, but the average for his whole class, slower learners included, topped out at over a year and a half above the national average. Atlanta Superintendent Crim's involvement of every segment of the city in partnerships with students, parents and school staffs in setting clear targets and achieving them is proving that his "Community of Believers" is no mere rhetorical ploy.

Several years ago we first began

The Washington, D.C. school system set up a summer camp at Round Meadow near Thurmont, Md., for computer and nature instruction for selected sixth grade pupils from District schools. Above, a group joins in an outdoor discussion and, right, instructor Lawrence Rhinehart supervises a computer class at Round Meadow.

Young tutor Lenee Morina (L.) gives a helping hand to Sandrina Bonner in a summer school math program at the Washington Highland Community School in Washington, D.C.

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hearing of computer summer camps for suburban students. This summer Washington, D.C., inner city youngsters are participating in such camps—not because technology in itself is any be-all, end-all—but because it is seen as part of the arsenal, along with reading, writing and work habits, with which young Blacks must face tomorrow's world.

Black organizations and individuals willing to help lessen the risk of economic and social genocide will find it is not necessary to reinvent the wheel. There are models in place. They include the work that Dr. James Comer of the Yale Child Study Center and the parents and staff of the Baldwin and Martin Luther King schools have done in New Haven; the Lawrence Hall of Science at Berkeley's Family Math and MESA programs, as well as yet untested variations on Adopt-A-School Partnerships for elementary schools that can produce true systemic changes. The Opportunities Office of the American Association for the Advancement of Science is in touch with cadres of professionals in science, math and technology all around the country who are ready to help.

No immense organizational apparatus is required to begin making a difference. In Philadelphia, a dynamic Black attorney whose family has established awards in memory of his brother in an inner city school is now opening an interest-bearing account for a Black elementary school child which will grow to a quite helpful sum by the time the youngster is ready for college. "This is something dozens of Black people I know can afford to do," he says. "And it will get kids thinking differently about their futures who otherwise perhaps never would."

It is of the utmost importance not only that Black children and their parents and teachers begin thinking differently, but that many of the rest of us also make some wrenching changes in the demands we make on ourselves.

As thousands of new immigrants, determined to make the most of this land of opportunity arrive in our urban areas at a time when the range of opportunities is dwindling, it is not irrelevant that many Blacks are now debating, as in the days of W.E.B. DuBois and Booker T. Washington, the question of values. If the debate itself does not become an ideological sideshow, it might prove of some real use. Certainly it is not revolutionary to reaffirm values that have been bedrock in the Black community for generations. As former Atlanta Mayor Maynard Jackson reminds us, speaking of the new Black business pioneers, "Most of the minority entrepreneurs who are out there today have come out of similar backgrounds — minimum comfort, great emphasis on education, and a strong force in the home."

It should not have been necessary for a 20-year comparative study of influences on young people 13 to 19 to remind us that even in the '80s, mothers and fathers rank just below their own age peers as influences on young people. Nor for another study to tell us that low-income children are much more apt to do better in school when their parents are involved and supportive. Just as it would be hard to calculate the benefits that would accrue if many more Black athletes and entertainers would join the relative handful that are now engaged in positive efforts to alter the values and attitudes of young Blacks and to encourage them to better prepare themselves for the rewarding, if less glamorous, lives that are realistically within their grasp.

But of course it is not necessary to be a headline hero or heroine to be an effective role model or mentor for Black children — or to persuade teenage parents and the communities from which they come that they will almost certainly lock themselves and their offspring in at the bottom of the society if they do not complete their schooling.

There is more than enough work waiting to be done. Churches, comunity centers, and homes can be used as after-school group study centers. Many more adults and college and high school students should be tutoring younger children. We need more Black civic and fraternal organizations adopting schools, classes and individual students, more business and professional people using their training and skills to assist in re-training teachers and restructuring curricula, or to help strapped school officials make the most of limited resources. It was encouraging at the end of a recent weekend conference of Black leaders from one metropolitan area to have several participants agree to urge the groups they represented to establish their own "Say Yes To A Youngster's Future" program.

The crucial point here is that the bell of crisis is tolling not just for school superintendents and teachers — it is tolling also for you.

If the schools are slow to ask for help, offer.

If some poor parents are hesitant to claim what their children should rightfully have, help them insist.

If hallways, classrooms and school yards are being usurped by those who hold learning in contempt, help reclaim them for their basic purposes.

If political leaders propose cynical cost-free ways to attract better teachers into the classrooms and retain existing staffs, form local and statewide alliances that will insist on both quality and adequate entry-level compensation.

If no other local organization or individual comes forward, become the catalyst or convenor.

It is not a matter of starting a war. The war is already underway. And our children are losing.

The pastor of one of the largest Black churches in the South used to warn his congregation — which included a fair number of college professors — "You can't go where you don't *know*."

The task of beginning to make sure that the youngest of our children are equipped with the knowledge they will need to navigate a difficult and uncertain future is critical enough to inspire the mobilizing of every resource Black Americans can command.

The tolling of that warning bell may at times seem faint and fitful. But the future of Blacks in America is at risk if it is not heeded.

Today is not a moment too soon to respond.

The Role of The Family: An Overview

Glenn C. Loury

The family, whether European or Oriental, socialist or bourgeois, modern or tradtitional is the center of social life in all cultrues. Societies rely on the family, in one form or another, to accomplish the essential tasks of producing and socializing children. The continued prosperity--indeed the survival--of any society depends on whether families adequately discharge this responsibility. These are truisms which would readily gain the assent of the common man or woman if asked. Yet, remarkably, this emphasis on the family as the center of social life, and correspondingly as the locus of the formation of personal character and thus the appropriate context within which to address problems of antisocial behavior, comes into conflict with much expert thinking in the social sciences and allied helping professions (Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985:213; Wilson, 1985b.) It is therefore noteworthy that we undertake in this volume to examine the role of family centered methods of intervention for the purpose of reducing the prevalence of deliquent juvenile behavior, for our doing so represents a departure from this thinking.

There are, it would seem, several basic reasons why this departure seems warranted. A growing body of scientific evidence attests to the link between later life involvement in criminal offending and the nature of early childhood experiences within the family (Loeber, 1985;

Farrington, 1985.) As well, there is now evidence to suggests that it is possible to intervene in such a way as to positively affect those familial behaviors bearing directly on this later criminality (Wahler, 1985; Wilson, 1985a.) So the importance of familial experience for the child's development toward delinquency and subsequent criminal participation, as well as the possibility of arresting this development through family centered intervention has been confirmed. Discussion of the evidence underlying this conclusion and of the policy implications of that evidence is the papers which follow in this volume.

But other reasons may be adduced to justify our focus on the family. There is now enormous concern in many quarters that the American family has weakened, and that this weakening is implicated in an array of social problems from criminal participation to academic achievement. This concern, arguably, involves elements of cultural and political reaction; it can be seen in part as a popular response to the diminished emphasis which social science professionals have attached to the family in their explanations of and remedies for a host of social ills, as well as a disenchantment with the efficacy of those programs of remediation which have been informed by this social science (Berger and Berger, 1984:Chp.2.) This reaction encompasses issues as far flung as homosexual rights, abortion, women's liberation, teenage pregnancy, and the "marriage tax." This concern has given rise to a veritable political movement with considerable influence on the current public discussion of domestic policy (Berger and Berger, 1984.) But even outside of these explicitly partisan circles, astute observers have noted an awakened interest in American public life in what might be called "civic virtue" (Wilson, 1985b.) We, as social analysts exploring possibilities for delinquency prevention, of course, here neither endorse nor impugn such developments, though we can hardly be unaffected by them. Neither can we ignore the context out of which they arise, or the extent to which their presence affects the feasibility of implementing any recommended course of action which we might proffer.

The growing prominence of family issues in our public discourse is grounded in demography as well as politics. Significant changes in American family life, reflecting long-term trends in patterns of marriage, divorce, child-bearing, household living arrangements and the sexual division of labor are indeed taking place (Cherlin, 1981.) Moreover, these developments are affecting identifiable subgroups of the population in strikingly different ways (Bianchi and Farley, 1979; Cherlin, 1981:Chp. 4; Wilson and Neckerman, 1984.) It is also the case that large differences between groups may be discerned in the extent of participation in youthful criminal offending (Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985:Chp.18; W.J. Wilson, 1984.) Thus, any policy oriented examination of the relationship between the family and delinquency prevention must confront the fact that the incidence of both family problems and delinquent behaviors will be substantially higher for some groups than others. Given the recent social and political history of intergroup relations in the U.S., this can becomes a sensitive matter (Loury, 1985a,b.) Discussions of "civic virtue," for example, which tacitly impute less of it to some groups than others are dangerous in a polity such as ours (Moynihan, 1985.) Therapeutic interventions which disproportionately involve "problem" groups confront both practical (recruitment and retention) and political (Berger and Berger, 1984:38) problems.

In what follows I will attempt to provide an overview of these issues. I begin with a (non-specialist's) discussion of the relationship between the family and delinquency, a topic pursued in greater depth in other papers in this volume. I then describe in general terms recent changes in family structure and composition, paying particular attention to the increasing out-of-wedlock birth rate among young mothers which is quite closely associated with changing family structure in some population subgroups. At this point the discussion turns to a more in depth consideration of the nature and possible causes of subgroup differences in family structure. The paper concludes with an analysis of the difficulty of dealing with such group differences in our public discourse.

The Family and Delinquency

Contemporary research points convincingly to the family as central locus of both explanations for and treatments of delinquent behavior.

Longitudinal studies of unruly youths have established that adolescent aggression and hostility are foreshadowed by similar behavior much earlier in childhood (West and Farrington, 1973,) and are systematically related to the closeness of the parent-child relationship, the extent of familial discord, and the nature of parental disciplinary practices (Glueck and Gleuck, 1950; McCord and McCord, 1959; West and Farrington, 1973.) In his now classic study of delinquency based on observation of a cross-section of northern California youths Travis Hirschi argued that the strength of the parent-child bond--the child's degree of "attachment" to the parent(s)--is a principal factor in explaining the delinquent behavior, or its absence (Hirschi, 1969.)

Wilson and Herrnstein (1985: p.217,) after concluding that predatory criminal offenders are more likely to exhibit the characteristics of impulsiveness and a disregard for the feelings of others, identify three channels through which parent-child interaction might magnify a child's predisposition toward these characteristics: (1) the extent to which parents succeed in instilling in the child a desire to win the approval of others (initially the parents themselves,) and a belief that such approval may reliably be expected if certain behavior is exhibited by the child ; (2) the development by the child of the ability and inclination to recognize the more distant negative consequences which may ensue from present gratifying actions; and, (3) the development of internalized constraint against certain (wrongful) actions, so that engaging in such actions produces anxiety in the child. This framework constitutes a useful conceptual perspective for approaching the family-delinquency question, one which derives from the theory of behavioral psychology, and for which there is a fair amount of evidence (Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985:213-263.)

But what is it about families which leads to the influences discussed above being benign or adverse in any particular case? And how can families be encouraged to behave in such a way as to avoid adversely influencing the child's development? The behavioral theory of Wilson and Herrnstein, as well as the findings of much research cited in their treatise, directs attention to the specific features of child-rearing practices within the family--how the parents respond to the early unruly behavior of children which is known to be associated with adolescent delinquency later in life. Moreover, some recent, innovative work of family therapists involved in counselling the families of difficult to control children suggests that parents can be "trained" to use discipline and punishment in ways which are more effective at altering the behavior of their children. The disciplinary methods advocated stress the consistent use by parents of mild sanctions applied conditional on the child exhibiting undesirable behaviors. What is crucial is that the parents avoid the erratic, emotional and inconsistent use of discipline, which impedes the child learning which behaviors on his part lead to outcomes which he prefers (Wilson, 1985a; Wahler, 1985; Patterson, 1982.)

Implicit in this approach is a relegation of considerations of socioeconomic environment and family structure to secondary explanatory status. What really matters, the foregoing argument suggests, is what methods of child-rearing are employed, not how much money or education the parents have, nor whether the parents' marriage remains intact. Though the notion that "broken families" cause delinquency is an old and popular one, the evidence in support of it (much of it reviewed in Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985:Chp.9) is not at all strong. There is good reason to believe that neither the absence of the father nor a low family income are by themselves causally linked with the childhood behavioral problems that foreshadow delinquency.

An interesting study of the family-delinquency link was recently undertaken by Walter Gove and Robert Crutchfield (1982.) Using data collected from interviews with 2000 parents of children near the age of 13 years in Chicago, parental reports of the child's behavior (concerning trouble at school, arguments or fights outside the home, running away, and "trouble with the law") were used to construct an index of delinquency, which in turn was related to a series of variables measuring the structure, social class and quality of internal relationships of the family (race, SES, marital status, parental nervous breakdown, use of physical punishment, parental knowledge of child's friends, quality of child's relationship with parent (attachment).) The find that race, and marital status are moderate though statistically significant covariates with delinquency, that lack of knowledge of friends and physical punishment are "fairly strong predictors of delinquency," but that "the way the parent experiences the child (attachment) (was) by far the strongest predictor of juvenile delinquency (p.315)." They conclude by noting that "we can be fairly certain that characteristics of the family are integrally related to delinquency, and that these characteristics generally involve ineffectual family functioning which is experienced as problematic by children (p.317)."

Using the 1967 and 1972 National Surveys of Youth, Joseph Rankin investigated the relationship between broken homes and delinquency. He relied for his measure of delinquency on children's self-reports about running away, truancy, fighting, vandalism, auto theft, and a number of other behaviors (Rankin, 1983.) He looked for differences in the odds of a child engaging in these behaviors depending on age, sex and family structure, distinguishing between whether one or both parents were absent. His principle finding was that "at least three types of juvenile misconduct--running away, truancy and auto theft--are strongly related to a *specific type* of broken home: those in which both biological parents are missing (p.477)."

A related finding emerges in the work of Kellam, et al. (1977.) They too emphasize that, in terms of assessing the impact of broken families on children, it is important to distinguish among different kinds of broken homes. They find that a child is being raised by the mother alone, is more severely disadvantaged than one in a home from which the father is absent, but in which certain other adults are present Their project is among the most important work being done on the consequences of family structure for child development in the inner-city and I will have occasion to refer to it later in this paper. Therefore, I will describe it in some detail here.

The work being conducted by Sheppard Kellam and his colleagues is based on the ongoing longitudinal observation of black families in the low income Woodlawn community of Chicago. These researchers have been following half of the community's first grade population of 1964 and the entire first grade population of 1966 and their families. The families were interviewed in 1966 and again in 1975. The investigators inquired into the relationship between between family structure and various indicators of the mental health of the children (Kellam, et al., 1977,) described how the structure of families changed overtime given the age, marital status and living arrangements of the mother when the child was born, and examined the consequences for the social and psychological wellbeing of the mothers of having raised their children under alternative living arrangements (Kellam, et al., 1982.)

Among the important findings of the earlier study was the sheer variety of living arrangements extant among the families of first grade children in Woodlawn. Among the 1,387 first graders in 1966, some 86 different families structures, categorized in terms of the number and relation of adults living in the same household as the children, were observed. For purposes of analysis, Kellam and associates grouped these types into some larger clusters--mother and father (40.6%), mother alone (37.2%), mother and grandmother(5.4%), mother and step-father(4.0%), mother and other(5.7%), and mother absent (7.0%). In order to get at the impact of familial organization on the mental health of young children, the latter was measured through interviews with the child's first and third grade teachers aimed at determining the extent to which the child was successfully adapting to the social environment of the school (the child's social adaptational status.) The effect of family structure on child socialization, a critical aspect of the developmental theory of Wilson and Herrnstein discussed above, could then be assessed by noting any differences among children from each of the various family types in the frequency with which maladaptive behavior observed was by the teachers, and differences in the extent to which maladpative behavior evidenced in the first grade had abated by the third grade.

Findings of this inquiry, reported in Kellam, et al. (1977), strongly suggest that father absence is not the most important feature of family structure from the point of view of predicting the degree of social maladaptation which a child may evidence. Mother alone families did entail a higher risk of child social maladaptation to first grade, a risk which grew even stronger by third grade. And mother-father families provided a lower risk of such maladaptation in the first grade, a risk which was lower still for third graders. But mother-grandmother families did nearly as well as mother-father families in socializing their children, while mother-stepfather families were not significantly better that a mother alone at avoiding social maladaptation in the child. (This, by the way, was also observed by Rankin (1983) for involvement in delinquency, where for a number of his delinquency measures one parent absent homes and one step-parent present homes were equally likely to experience a delinquent child.)

Much other work along these lines could be cited. Austin (1978), using a 1964 sample of California high school students with self-reported delinquency measures (theft, auto theft, vandalism, and assault,) looks at the link between father-absence and delinquency for black and white boys and girls, finding: (1) no relationship for black boys; (2) the counterintuitive result that black girls from father absent homes were less likely to commit a theft; (3) higher delinquency for white boys from father absent homes only in the case of auto theft; but (4) the expected detrimental effect of father-absence for white girls with respect to auto theft, vandalism and assault. Other work has found interesting patterns of interaction between family background (socioeconomic status as well as family structure) and the SES level of the community of residence in predicting delinquency (Johnstone, 1979,) suggesting that the effects of poor family background may be greatest for those youngsters residing in relatively affluent communities. Also, work analyzing the family correlates of drug abuse among adolescents finds adolescent self-esteem, perception of parental behavior, and the ease and quality of communications between parents and child to be significant predictors of drug use (Gantman, 1978; Rees and Wilborn, 1983.)

Thus, while it is clear that the family is important, it is equally clear that no simple relationship between household composition or socioeconomic status of the family adequately accounts for the link between familial characteristics and delinquency. Moreover, there is strong evidence to suggest that the internal quality of parent-child interaction is closely linked with the extent to which families succeed or fail in the task of rearing non-delinquent children.

Changes in Family Structure

Compared to a generation ago, the American family of today has changed dramatically (Cherlin, 1981.) Older and younger adults are more likely to live alone (Fuch, 1983.) Divorce is a significantly more likely phenomenon today than it was thirty years ago (Cherlin, 1981.) The age at which women first marry has been rising (Cherlin, 1981,) the fraction of first children conceived prior to marriage has been increasing (O'Connell and Moore, 1980,) and the proportion of women who are married when their first birth occurs has been falling (O'Connell and Moore, 1980.) After a declining trend which lasted for nearly half a century, the proportion of birth cohorts (male and female) estimated to remain unmarried throughout their lives has begun to rise. (Schoen, et al., 1984, estimate that for both sexes the birth cohort 1938-1942 represents a peak in the proportion ever marrying of those surviving to age 15, with both earlier and later cohorts being estimated as having smaller fractions of persons ever to marry.) Marital fertility is falling, the fertility among most groups of unmarried women is rising, and even for those with falling unmarried fertility, marital fertility is falling faster (see tables below.) Perhaps most importantly, the incidence of teenage sexuality and childbearing has risen sharply in recent years (Zelnick and Kanter, 1980.)

The increase in family instability--i.e. the growing number of families which break-up or never form, leaving children to be raised by one of the parents, usually the mother--is a phenomenon affecting whites, blacks and Hispanics alike (Frisbie, et al., 1980,) though the phenomenon is by far most significant among blacks (Wilson and Neckerman, 1984.) Divorce, separation and widowhood are the principal means by which single-parent families arise among whites (Cherlin, 1981; Bane and Ellwood, 1984,) but the primary contributor to the rise of single-parent (i.e. female-headed) families among blacks has been the relative growth of out-of-wedlock births. Among black women aged 15-24 the fraction of births which occured outside of marriage rose from 41% in 1955 to 68% in 1980. Out-of-wedlock births have also risen to unprecedented levels for white women, though the ratios remain far lower than for blacks. These trends in out-of-wedlock birth rates reflect initially a rise in the fertility of unmarried women, but more importantly as the tables below reveal, a secular decline in marital fertility:

Births to Unmarried Women per Thousand Women, By Race and Age of Mother, Selected Years

	WHITES			NONWHITES		
	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29
1940	3.3	5.7	4.0	42.5	46.1	32.5
1950	5.1	10.0	8.7	68.5	105.4	94.2
1955	6.0	15.0	13.3	77.6	133.0	125.2
1960	6.6	18.2	18.2	76.5	166.5	171.8
1965	7.9	22.1	24.3	75.8	152.6	164.7
1970	10.9	22.5	21.1	90.8	120.9	93.7
1975	12.0	15.5	14.8	86.3	102.1	73.2
1980	16.0	22.6	17.3	83.0	109.2	79.1

Percent of Births which Occur Out-Of-Wedlock, By Race and Age of Mother, Selected Years

	WHITES			NONWHITES		
	15-19	20-24	25-29	15-19	20-24	25-29
1955	6.4	1.9	0.9	40.1	18.9	13.3
1960	7.1	2.2	1.1	42.1	20.0	14.1
1965	11.4	3.8	1.9	49.2	23.0	16.3
1970	17.1	5.2	2.1	61.3	29.5	18.1
1975	23.0	6.1	2.6	74.7	39.9	22.7
1979	30.3	9.5	3.7	82.5	50.1	28.7

(Source: Adapted from Wilson and Neckerman, 1984, Tables 3 & 4.)

It is clear from these tables that, while the fertility of unmarried women (with the exception of white teens) held steady or declined between 1970 and 1980 (note the decline by more than 50% in fertility of unmarried nonwhite women ages 25-29 from 1960-1980,) birth rates among married women fell sufficiently faster that the fraction of births occuring to unmarried women of all ages and races rose notably over this period. Indeed between 1960 and 1979 fertility among both white and non-white married women fell by roughly one-third (*Vital Statistics of the United States, 1979*.) In addition the fraction of women who are unmarried has been rising dramatically in recent years. Among white women 20-24 years of age, the percent single rose from 32.2% to 47.2% between 1965 and 1980, while the rise for comparable black women was from 34.3% to 68.7%. For women 25-29 the fraction unmarried more than doubled among whites (8.0% to 18.3%) and more than tripled among blacks (11.6% to 37.2%) between 1965 and 1980 (Wilson and Neckerman, 1984.)

These trends reflect several factors. As already mentioned, there has been an increasing tendency for American women to delay marriage--the average age at first marriage has been rising among both blacks and whites (Cherlin, 1981)--and a decline in the extent to which premarital pregnancies (themselves of increasing frequency) are legitimated by marriage (O'Connell and Moore, 1980.) For example, O'Connell and Moore estimate that among white teens (15-19) who had a first birth between 1959 and 1962, 31.4% of the births were premaritally conceived, though slightly more than two-thirds of these were legitimated by marriage. Whereas 62.6% of white teens who experienced first births between 1975 and 1978 had conceived prior to marriage and slightly more than half of these births were subsequently legitimated. Among black teens the premarital conception rates are higher (90.1% of first births between 1975 and 1978,) the tendency to legitimate these births lower, and the rate of decline in the tendency to legitimate greater than for whites (23% of premaritally conceived births to blacks legitimated, 1959-1962, compared to 8% legitimated by marriage, 1975-1978.) According to these estimates, black women ages 20-24 having first births between 1975 and 1978 were more than three times as likely as comparable whites to have premaritally conceived and, given a premarital conception, half as likely to have married prior to delivery.

The rising incidence of divorce has contributed to there being relatively more unmarried women at risk of child-bearing. Between 1950 and 1979 the fraction of women ages 25-44 who were divorced rose from 3% to 9% among whites, and from 4% to 13% among blacks. Frisbie et al., 1980, report that Mexican Americans also have experienced increasing divorce and separation rates (between 1960 and 1970,) though the rate of increase appears to be intermediate between that of whites and blacks, while the level of separation and divorce for Mexican Americans remains lower than for the other groups. Among Hispanics more broadly there is substantial variation in the incidence of family instability. One study, using the 1976 Survey of Income and Education which identified separately Non-Hispanic whites, blacks, Mexicans, Puerto Ricans, Central/South Americans and other Spanish origin families (Tienda and Angel, 1982,) found (using weighted data to correct for the survey's oversampling among low income households) that the incidence of female headed was greatest among Puerto Ricans

(38.6%, rivaling the black rate of 44.3%), and least among Mexican (19.9%) and Central/South American families (19.3% compared to a non-Hispanic white rate of 14.1%.)

But much more important than divorce for young and black women has been the trend in the fraction of women who never marry, which rose from 9% to 23% of black women 25-44 between 1950 and 1979, while staying constant at roughly 10% over this period for whites (Cherlin, 1980; 1950 figures are for nonwhites.) For white women 14-24, the fraction separated or divorced rose from 3.3 % to 4.5% between 1947 and 1980, but the fraction never married increased from 62.9% to 68.6% over the same period. Using varied Census Bureau sources, Wilson and Neckerman found that, among black women 14-24 the percent separated or divorced actually fell from 8.4% to 4.3% between 1947-1980, while the fraction never married rose sharply from 59.5% to 82.4% (Wilson and Neckerman, 1984, T.10.) This racial difference in the increased fraction of never married women has also been observed in the Panel Study of Income Dynamics (PSID) by Bane and Ellwood, who report a widening black-white difference in the fraction never married, and claim that "...in 1982 four times as large a proportion of black as white women were never married, separated, divorced or widowed mothers (Bane and Ellwood, 1984:33).

Thus, female family heads have become both more numerous and younger among blacks and whites, but especially among blacks. From 1950 to 1983 the fraction of female family heads under the age of 35 rose from 26% to 43% for blacks, and from 12% to 29% among whites. Over the same period the fraction of female-headed families containing children under 18 rose from 47% to 68% for blacks, and from 37% to 57% among whites (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984.) The increasing prevalence of female-headed families is illustrated by the experience of the last decade:

Percent Families with Female Heads by Race 1974-1983

	White	Black	Hispanic		White	Black	Hispanic
1974	9.9	34.0	17.4	1979	11.6	40.5	19.8
1975	10.5	35.3	18.8	1980	11.6	40.2	19.2
1976	10.8	35.9	20.9	1981	11.9	41.7	21.8
1977	10.9	37.1	20.0	1982	12.4	40.6	22.7
1978	11.5	39.2	20.3	1983	12.2	41.9	22.8

(Source: Adapted from Wilson and Neckerman, 1984, Table 2.)

These trends have significant implications for the living arrangements of children, and therefore for the incidence of childhood poverty, as has been emphasized by recent observers (Moynihan, 1985; Wilson and Neckerman, 1984; Bane and Ellwood, 1984.) For obvious reasons the incidence of poverty is substantially greater among female-headed households; the poverty rate of female-headed families was 36.3% in 1982, compared to a rate for married couple families of 7.6%. Female-headed families made up 45.7% of the poverty population in 1982, and 71% of the black poor. In central cities, 60% of the poor, and 77.9% of the black poor consist of persons living in female-headed households (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1983.)

Young, never married mothers though likely to be living at home when they have their children, are also likely to change households before their child reaches the age of six. Bane and Ellwood estimate (using the PSID) that two-thirds of black and white unwed mothers who give birth while living at home will move into different living arrangements prior to their child's sixth birthday. Among blacks, though, two-thirds of these moves are into independent female headed families, while for whites two-thirds of the moves are into two parent families. They further estimate that, independent of the original living arrangements of the mother, among children born out-of-wedlock, less than 10% of whites but more than 50% of blacks will remain in female-headed families for their entire childhood (Bane and Ellwood, 1984.)

These trends in teen and out-of-wedlock pregnancy are quite significant features of the environment in which a family-centered program of delinquency prevention must operate. For the consequences of early pregnancy for both mother and child can be quite severe. Teenage motherhood has been shown to be associated with prolonged poverty and welfare dependency (Wilson and Neckerman, 1984; Bane and Ellwood, 1983; Hofferth and Moore, 1979,) low achievement in education by the mother (Hofferth and Moore, 1979,) and increased subsequent fertility and the closer spacing of births (Trussel and Menken, 1978.) But perhaps most significant and disturbing for delinquency prevention, in light of the earlier discussed findings concerning the link between family structure and child psychological development, are the findings from the longitudinal study of 1960's Woodlawn first graders and their families led by Shepard Kellam.

In their long term follow-up analysis of this population (Kellam, et al., 1982) as many of the original families of 1966 first graders as could be located (75%) were interviewed in 1975-76. Here the focus was on how the child's family structure had evolved, given the mother's age at birth and her living arrangements at the initial survey date. First, they found that mother alone families tended to remain that way, with nearly three-fourths of mother alone families in 1966 being remaining in that state in 1975-76 (this independent of the age of mother at birth.) However, given that the father was present in 1966, the chances were far greater for older mothers (20+) that he would still be present a decade later (about two-thirds) than for teen mothers (about one-third.) Indeed, over half of the teen mothers in mother-father families in 1966 were in mother alone families ten years later. Thus, the fact of the mother having been a teen at the child's birth meant tht it was much more likely that the child would eventually end up being raised in precisely the kind of household which these and other researchers have associated with greatest risk to the healthy socialization of the child.

Among the more alarming of their finding (considering the high incidence of teen births among blacks together with the apparent tendency for such families, whatever their initial structure, to evolve toward mother aloneness) was the extent of social isolation experienced by mothers who live alone while raising their children. These mothers were far more likely to rear their children without any adult assistance inside or outside the family. (That is they were not only alone within the household, but were also more frequently without any external support in the child rearing task.) Sixty percent of mothers alone, compared to at most 8% of other family types, reported that there was noone else "available to the child for confiding, activities, or setting and enforcing rules" (Kellam, et al., 1982:549.) This was true of all mothers living alone in 1975-76, whether they did so in 1966 or not. Moreover, mothers living alone were found to be much less likely to belong to any social or political organizations, while families which included both mother and father at both interview dates were most involved in organizations. Indeed, one indication of the isolation of mothers alone was the fact that they exhibited a much higher rate of refusal than others to participate in the follow-up interview, despite advance notice that the researchers were offering a service program to all mothers and their teenage offspring. This observation suggest that the recruitment and retention of such mothers will be a central issue in any program of intervention for delinquency prevention.

Causes of Subgroup Differences

The foregoing discussion suggests that recent trends in American family life, particularly the increase in teenage motherhood and the growing numbers of female-headed households, constitute a troubling context for many social policy initiatives, not the least of which would be delinquency prevention. This discussion also points to the dramatic differences between population subgroups in family stability as a central feature of these trends. Given the also dramatic differences which exist between groups in the rates of participation in criminal activities (Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985,) it seems appropriate to consider in greater detail why it is that these group differences in family behavior arise. It is evident that blacks will be disproportionately overrepresented in any target population for the receipt of such treatment aimed at juvenile delinquency prevention as may be devised. It is also evident, from the history of race relations in American society, as well as from contemporary political discussion of racial differences in criminal participation, that this is a matter which should be approached carefully, and with as great an understanding of underlying causative mechanism as available research permits.

A discussion of this sort can hardly avoid recalling the experience surrounding the controversial "Moynihan Report" (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1965.) There Moynihan had made a historico-sociological argument regarding the causes of the (then only recently noticed) trend in family instability among blacks, and a policy argument concerning the implications of the trend for the pursuit of equality of opportunity. His sociology was derived alomost without reservation or alteration from the earlier work of E. Franklin Frazier (Frazier, 1939,) and held That The black population was characterized (Or, better, plagued) by a "matri-focal family structure" depriving from The experience of slavery during which the role of black men within the family had been severly circumscribed. His policy argument was that, in light of the deleterious economic consequences of this family instability, a national policy of racial equality should attend directly to promoting alternative family behaviors among blacks, largely through the encouragement of greater employment among black men (Rainwater and Yancey, 1966.)

Recent historical research has demonstrated that the classical explanation of family instability among blacks (Frazier, 1939) on which Moynihan had relied is almost certainly wrong. Racial differences of the extent discussed above are a post-WW II phenomenon, and are not to be found in the earlier historical record; they therefore cannot be explained by reference to the experience of black slavery. Although national information on family structure first became available only with the 1940 decennial census, examination of early manuscript census forms for individual cities and counties clearly demonstrates that most women heading families in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were widows; that even among the very poor, a substantial majority of the families were intact; and that, for the most part, the positive association between intact family structure and social class was due to the higher rate of mortality among poor men (Furstenberg et al., 1975.)

The evidence demonstrates as well that among northern, urban black migrant communities in the early twentieth century, the intact family was also the norm. Approximately 85% of black families living in Harlem in 1925 were intact, and the teenage mother raising her children alone was virtually unknown; comparable findings were noted for blacks in Buffalo in 1910 (Gutman, 1976.) In 1940 10.1% of white families and 14.9 percent f black families were female-headed; and though single-parent families were more common among city dwellers, census data from that year indicate that fully 72% of urban black families with children were headed by men (Wilson and Neckerman, 1984.) By 1960 the proportion of single-parent families had begun to increase sharply for blacks, rising from 21.7 % in 1960, to 28.3% by 1970, and reaching 41.9% in 1983. Among whites the proportion also rose, from 8.1% in 1960 to 12.2% in 1983. By that year one in five families with children under 18 was headed by a woman, including 14.2% of white families, 24.2% of Hispanic families, and 47.9% of black families (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1984.)

We may ask then, if Moynihan's (and Frazier's) sociology was wrong, what accounts for the current group disparity in family instability? Given the higher rate of teenage childbearing among urban blacks, investigators have explored a number of hypotheses to explain this phenomenon. Beginning in the mid-1960's, a series of ethnographic studies involving close observation of specific communities have been undertaken (Clark, 1965; Rainwater, 1970; Stack, 1974; Gilder, 1978.) These studies have called attention to cultural and normative factors operative in poor urban communities, deriving from the severe economic hardship of inner-city life, but interacting with governmental income support systems (Gilder, 1978; Murray, 1984,) and evolving in such a way as to feedback onto individual behavior and exacerbate this hardship. There is not a single theoretical perspective discernible in this literature, though common to much of it is an emphasis on lowered expectations due to limited economic opportunities, peer influences inducing the individual to place less weight upon criteria of success as defined by the larger society, and low self-esteem and a diminished sense of personal efficacy among poor adolescent men and women. Clark (1965) has expressed this conception thusly:

> In the ghetto, the meaning of the illegitimate child is not ultimate disgrace. There is not the demand for abortion or for surrender of the child that one finds in more priviledged communities. In the middle class, the disgrace of illegitimacy is tied to personal and family aspirations. In lower-class families...the girl loses only some of her already limited options by having an illegitimate child (p. 72)

Wilson and Neckerman (1984), citing evidence from a survey of black female teens undertaken in 1979 by the Urban League of Chicago and compiled by Dennis Hogan of the University of Chicago, argue that there is an insufficient aversion to unwed pregnancy in this population. The aforementioned data are said to show that black teen mothers reported far fewer pregnancies to be unwanted than their white counterparts (among whom Zelnick and Kanter, 1980, report finding 82% of premarital pregnancies to 15-19 year olds to have been unwanted.) Stack, 1974, observing an unnamed midwestern inner-city community notes "People show pride in all their kin, and particularly new babies born into their kinship networks. Mothers encourage sons to have babies, and even more important, men coax their 'old ladies' to have their baby" (p. 121.)

Observation of participants in Project Redirection, a two year planned intervention with teenagers (black, Hispanic and white in Boston, Harlem, Phoenix and Riverside) who had already borne one child out-of-wedlock, which had the objective of preventing the additional pregnancy, confirms that prevailing values and attitudes among these young women and their boyfriends constitute a critical part of the teen pregnancy story (Branch, et al., 1984.) There it was observed that "Participants who lack self-esteem often find it difficult to resist pressure from boyfriends...Participants tolerate (being beaten by their boyfriends, or exploited economically) believing that, because of their children, other men will not want them (p. 39)." Moreover, concern at the Harlem cite about the issue of welfare dependency led to the following observation:

> Staff initially took an activist stance in their efforts to intercede with the welfare system on behalf of participants.. This pattern changed, however when...(certain) behavior patterns were beginning to emerge./.It seemed that many were beginning to view getting their own welfare grants as the next stage in their careers...(I)t became apparent that some participants' requests for separate grants and independent households were too often a sign of manipulation by boyfriends, in whose interest it was to have a girlfriend on welfare with an apartment of her own...(S)taff realized that these attitudes and behaviors were...counterproductive to the ...goal of promoting self-sufficiency (Branch et al., p. 60)

Project Redirection involved the use of "community women," older women who befriended and advised the teen mothers over the course of the first year of the study. It is noteworthy that these community women "...have come out strongly against emancipated minor status for participants, feeling that it is better that teens remain under family guidance, no matter how difficult the family situation or conflict may be (Branch et al., 1984:60.)" The Project had limited success in reducing subsequent pregnancy among participants within the first 12 months--while the community mothers were on hand (14% of participants became pregnant compared to 22% of the control group.) However, there was no statistically significant difference in recividism among participants compared to controls over the 24 month period of observation (45% of participants and 49% of controls had a subsequent pregnancy during this period.) (Quint and Riccio, 1985.) Neither was the program able to alter contraceptive practices among the participant group. Commenting on this outcome Branch et al., 1984, observed: "The major finding is that members of this target group...hold a constellation of attitudes and values about boyfriends, sexual relationships, pregnancy andchildbearing that are extremely resistant to change. Against the tenacity of these values, the presentation of factual information alone is inadequate to bring about substantial behavioral improvement (p. 103.)" These findings, together with the earlier cited ethnographic literature lend credence to the view that peer group and community behavioral norms in the inner-city play a substantial role in the explosion of young single parents.

Yet this conclusion would not gain universal assent from students of lower class life. This is especially so when population sub-group differences in dysfunctional behavior are large, and are attributed to the operation of distinct normative frames for adolescents in the respective groups. For example, W.J. Wilson (1984, p.109) has argued that "(It is) a well founded sociological assumption...that different ethnic behavior and outcomes are largely reflections of different opportunities for and external obstacles against advancement, ones determined by different historical and material circumstances..." He argues that the timing of arrival and patterns of settlement in the United States by various ethnic groups, together with the structure of economic opportunities which they faced, substantially accounts for any significant behavioral differences across groups. This view may be correct, but it must confront the substantial differences across similarly situated groups in behavior, as well as the graphic descriptive evidence of the ethnographic literature which seems to support the notion of distinct subcultures. As Wilson and Herrnstein note in their discussion of group differences in criminal participation (1985: 485) "(N)o one has yet unraveled in any detail the causal processes that underlie (this, i.e. Wilson's conception)." [Among the many examples of puzzles to be explain which could be cited in the area of adolescent pregnancy: The Project Redirection investigators found dramatic differences between the fraction of their participants who had married the fatherof their child across the geographic sites. In Boston (92% Puerto Rican participants), 22.5% of participants were married, compared to Harlem (92% black participants), where only 1.2% were (Branch et al., 1984:23.)]

Nonetheless, reliance on subgroup cultural differences as the primary explanation of variations across groups *is* problematic. Individual variation within groups in almost any social behavior is greater than between group average differences (Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985.) Plausibly, economic class, community environment and subgroup cultural effects interact in complex ways. As Wilson and Neckerman (1984) stress, "the problem is far too complex to give explanatory primacy to behavioral norms" alone. For example, they cite unpublished work by Dennis Hogan examining the likelihood of teen pregnancy among girls who live in married couple families, compared with those living in households with single mothers and grandparents, and in independent mother headed households. Hogan reportedly finds that the rate of premarital parenthood is highest among teens living with in mother alone households, but it is as low for teens living with mother and grandmother as it is for those in married couple families. Evidently, the impact of family structure on the incidence of a number of undesirable teen behaviors depends upon interactions internal to the family which are not well proxied by absence of the father, and which are not fully captured by the notion of peer or community norms.

Concerning teen pregnancy this is borne out in the analysis of the

Chicago Urban League data by Hogan and Kitagawa, 1985. There, using a random sample of more than 1,000 black females aged 13-19 who lived in Chicago in 1979, they estimated a two equation, multivariate probability model of the likelihood of pregnancy, distinguishing between the events "being sexually active" and "becoming pregnant conditional on being sexually active." They control for a number of measures of social background including social class; parental marital status; number of siblings; quality of neighborhood; parental control of dating; and presence of sister who is a teen mother." They find that family structure and parental control of dating have significant and large effects on the probability of being pregnant (parental control of dating is by far the single most powerful variable in their equations); but that "(t)he large impact of family structure and parental supervision of early dating on the overall rate of pregnancy is because of the effects of these variables on the age at which black teens become sexually active" (p. 888), and not due to their effect on the probability of pregnancy conditional on being sexually active. The importance of control of early dating behavior in this analysis suggests that it is not so much the structure of the family as the behavior of the adult members toward the teens which is crucial in avoiding early pregnancy.

Mention should also be made here of the rather original argument of Murray (1984) concerning "status rewards." In an iconoclastic and widely discussed critique of the traditional approach to social welfare policy. Murray charges that aspects of the conventional wisdom which has dominated thinking about public policy in the social sciences and allied helping professions since the sixties have contributed to the decline in living standards among inner-city blacks, on aspect of which is the growth of female-headed families. He holds that a complex and delicately balanced system of values and norms regulates the behavior of individuals in poor (and all other) communities, that adverse change in these behavioral norms has occurred in recent decades, and that ideological precepts particular to the liberal wisdom on social policy (e.g., aversion to imputing responsibility for dysfunctional behavior to the individuals engaging in it, so as to avoid "blaming the victim") may have played a key role in abetting this change. (Note here the complimentarity between Murray's argument and the observations of Wilson, 1987.)

Murray further suggests that status distinctions which people in poor communities make among themselves, based on differential individual efforts to cope with their difficult circumstances, have historically played a central role in encouraging poverty ameliorating behavior in low-income populations, and that, by fostering the view that poverty is everywhere and always the result of systemic failures, the liberal orthodoxy has undermined the basis of such status distinctions among poor persons. This provocative thesis remains untested; indeed, it does not readily lend itself to verification through statistical models. There is some impressionistic support for it in the descriptive literature. (See, especially, the Project Redirection description of the attitudes of participants and "community women" in Harlem mentioned earlier (Branch, et al., 1984,) and Gilder, 1978.)

At the other end of the spectrum, there are those who argue that economic developments adversely affecting the employment of black men are mainly accountable for the differential family instability observed in this population. The strongest case along these lines is made in Wilson and Neckerman, 1984. They note that the numbers of employed black men relative to the numbers of black women of comparable age (their "marriageable pool index") has declined sharply for every age group of blacks since 1960, with the decline being particularly precipitate for younger men. The low employment of black men is presumed to reduce their propensity to marry, without having a comparable negative effect on the propensity to reproduce. The result is an increasing out-of-wedlock birth rate, especially for the young, with resultant increases in the percentage of families headed by women.

This argument, though suggestive of an "opportunities based" explanation for the trend among blacks, is far from satisfactory. First, it presumes what in part needs to be explained, the differential consequence of declining employment for marriage on the one hand and procreation of the other. Second, it tacitly assumes that all unemployment (or, more accurately, non-employment) among black men is involuntary, due to limited demand for labor. There is some evidence that this is not entirely the case (Freeman and Holzer, 1985.) It is arguable, for example, that men's effort to find work would be positively related to their family responsibilities; the fact that they are fathers but not husbands, and that they do not incur the financial obligations of fatherhood might then be taken as an explanation of their reduced employment. Moreover, close inspection of the time series of the marriageable pool index indicates that the timing of decline in this measure of male employment relative to female availability does not fit well the timing of the increase in marital instability among blacks.

Thus, there are a number of alternative explanations for the disparity between groups in family structure, without there being compelling evidence for any one. I can do no better here than Wilson and Herrnstein (1985)in calling for careful, longitudinal study of the relevant populations to better ascertain the interacting roles of subgroup cultural factors, economic opportunities and government policies. The opportunities argument should not be dismissed, but it should not be allowed to crowd from the public discussion and the scholarly agenda a thorough investigation of normative considerations as possible causes of this troubling problem.

Conclusion

That such a "crowding out" is possible was graphically illustrated by the political aftermath of the Moynihan Report of twenty years ago. Reaction from some quarters to his characterization of lower class black life were sharply negative. The Moynihan Report became the subject of intense public debate and, indeed, vilification. The reasons for this are complex and intensely political (Rainwater and Yancey, 1966,) but the consequences of this reaction appear straightforward: Public discussion of the role of family structure in perpetuating poverty, especially among blacks, was virtually foreclosed. Moreover, there developed an intellectual reaction, predicated upon relativistic notions about black culture, and expressed in such academic enterprises as the development of a new "black sociology" (Ladner, 1973.) Those involved in this enterprise saw themselves as defending "the black family" against stereotypic characterization and negative judgement predicated upon a (middle class, white) standard which was inherently arbitrary (Ladner, 1971; Hill, 1972.) The effect of this was quite pervasive, and can still be seen in the writings of self-consciously "minority sociologists" on family matters (Mirande, 1977; Mirande and Staples, 1980.)

Indeed, it seems that precisely in the areas with which this delinquency enterprise is concerned--family and criminal participation--this reaction has been strongest (Loury, 1985a.) I offer here but one of many possible examples--the response of Kenneth Clark, whose Dark Ghetto presented a seminal and highly influential analysis of inner-city social pathology in 1965--to the celebrated Bernard Goetz case.

Writing in the *New York Times*, Kenneth Clark, while condemning the unseemly vigilante sentiments evoked by the case, goes on to ascribe to "society" responsibility for the criminal acts of young men which played such a prominent role in evoking these sentiments (Clark, 1985. He Clark argues that the young men commiting most street crimes have been "mugged" themselves. They are victims of "pervasive community, economic and educational muggings" perpetrated by "a hypocritical society," at the hands of which "their humanity is being systematically destroyed." He further asserts that the murder, rape and robbery which many city dwellers fear are but "the inevitable criminality that comes out of the degradation of human beings."

Here we have the "environmental determinist" position displayed in sharp relief. Yet, beyond the substantial evidentiary basis for questioning this conclusion, there is the fact that this perspective is profoundly disrespectful of the values and capacities of the poor black inner-city residents on whose behalf Clark presumably argues. Economically depressed communities vary substantially in the extent of criminal behavior among their inhabitants. Some impoverished urban minority populations have been observed to have very low crime rates (Wilson and Herrnstein, 1985.) Most violent crimes are commited by a small minority of offenders (Farrington, 1985), whose behavior can hardly be taken as representative of the inevitable consequences of poverty. Thus, even in the harshest slums the vast majority of the victims of these "societal muggings" do not violently brutalize their neighbors. These poor but proud and law-abiding Americans can hardly be taken as abberant exceptions to some sociological law requiring the unemployed to become "mindlessly anti-social" (Clark's usage.)

It is plausible to hold that even the poor deserve to be held responsible for their conduct (Mead, 1985.) They are made poorer still they are not accorded the respect inherent in the equal applications of the obligations of citizenship. The "social mugging" analogy of Clark is therefore not only dubious sociology, but also dangerous politically. It invites the society to think of the poor as morally different, socially distorted human beings. What such a construction "achieves" by way of fostering guilt and pity among the population at large may be more than offset by the extent to which it helps to create in the public mind the presumtion that poor people are incapable of responsible behavior. And yet, the fact that this construction is seriously offered by such a distinguished and influential black public figure suggests the depth with which this perspective is held in the minority population, and the nature of the constraints facing those who would make policy in this difficult area.

These constraints seem to operate at the highest levels of government. It is instructive that, when in April of 1985 Sen. Moynihan presented the Godkin Lectures at the Kennedy School of Government on the topic "Family and Nation" (Moynihan, 1985,) he seemed to be keenly aware of these political constraints. Over the course of three lectures the Senator provided an assessment of the current troubling conditions of poverty among the young, and some history of the formulation of family policy during his tenure as advisor to Presidents Johnson and Nixon. He was particularly interested to discuss the pitfalls of public discourse and policy making on sensitive normative issues, constraints which he perceives as necessarily attaching to the public discussion of the "family problem." He argued that diversity of values and beliefs about what constitutes healthy family life obviates the promulgation of policy intended to strengthen the family, offering the conversion of the Carter Administration's planned White House Conference on *the* Family into a conference on *families* as evidence of this difficulty (Berger and Berger, 1984.) Though in the lectures he "insist(ed) that social policy must flow from social values and not from social science," aside from the notion that a generous provision should be made for the poor, he dared not to venture what specific social values might underlie a contemporary American family policy.

Of particular interest was his treatment of themes originally raised in his prescient piece of social forecasting now known as the "Moynihan Report" (U.S. Dept. of Labor, 1965.) There he had concluded: "...(the) policy of the United States (should be) to bring the Negro American to full and equal sharing in the responsibilities and rewards of citizenship. To this end, the programs of the Federal government bearing on this objective should be designed to have the effect, directly or indirectly, of enhancing the stability and resources of the Negro American family." The experience of the intervening years had apparently disabused him of political feasibility of taking such explicit consideration of population sub-group differences in formulating policy toward the family. For he maintained in his Godkin Lectures that "It is especially to be hoped that we might hereafter consciously try to avoid the entanglements of race, ethnicity, region."

Yet one must wonder whether it is in fact possible to avoid some such entanglements, if one is to effectly deal with these social problems. More than one lesson can be drawn from the bitter denunciation of that 1965 report, and in the relative calm afforded by our current times we might consider some alternatives. The Senator's lesson as of 1966: "The time when white men, whatever their motives, could tell Negroes what was or was not good for them, is now definitely and decidedly over. An era of bad manners is almost certainly begun. For a moment it seemed that this could be avoided, that the next two decades could be bypassed in a sweep of insight and daring. But the destiny reasserted itself" (Moynihan, *Commentary*, 1966, "The President and the Negro: The Moment Lost,".)

The 1985 version of this wisdom appears to be roughly captured by the notion that "The time has passed when public officials, whatever their motives, could tell citizens, whatever their race, what what was or was not good for them." This is tantamount to saying that the time of inspired public leadership has passed. One is left to wonder how can social trends so broadly based and pervasive as those evident in the lower class black family be affected absent inspired public leadership (Wilson, 1985a.)

Another lesson which might be inferred from this history is that the costs of avoiding public discussion on matters of vital social import, given the existence of a factual base derived from research and capable of supporting concrete programs of intervention, can be extraordinarily high. Is it niave to think that standing firm in 1965 on the proposition that family structure was shifting adversely among blacks with dire consequences soon to follow, and that programs of intervention targetted specifically at this problem could be developed given the current state of scientific knowledge, might have made it possible (easier) to undertake in 1985 a plan of action such as we consider in the remainder of this volume? Is an extreme relativism over values, a legacy of the 1960's, to be accepted uncritically, or might not courageous and inspired public leadership be able to create a different public consensus on such issues?

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Policy Review

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HELPING THE POOR HELP THEMSELVES

ROBERT L. WOODSON

NATIONAL CENTER FOR NEIGHBORHOOD ENTERPRISE

The National Center for Neighborhood Enterprise, a research demonstration and development organization, was founded in 1981 on the belief that communities must build on their own strengths to develop successful enterprises dealing with economic and social problems.

The Center's board of directors, program advisory committee, staff and consultant advisors bring together individuals with diverse specialities, background and experiences. From grassroots leaders to specialists in finance, business development and economic policy, its experts share the desire to promote community self-sufficiency through support of effective neighborhood mediating structures in low-income communities.

OBJECTIVES

- o Recognize, promote and explain alternative approaches to community development.
- o Identify and analyze successful program principles, strategies and techniques that may be transferable.
- o De-mystify information technology and encourage grassroots organizations to make greater use of it in solving problems.
- o Provide technical assistance to local self-help groups.
- o Encourage financial support for the programs profiled.
- o Formulate policy recommendations to assist neighborhood revitalization.

PROGRAMS

Alternative Education * Crime Prevention
Economic Development * Family Preservation

Helping the Poor Help Themselves

ROBERT L. WOODSON

For the past five decades it has been an uncontested proposition that government should be responsible for people who are incapable of caring for themselves. Republicans and Democrats, liberals and conservatives, wittingly or unwittingly, accepted that premise and built forty years of policy around it. Today, the principal debate in partisan terms focuses on the question of how government discharges that responsibility. Should grant-in-aid be discharged through a centralized bureaucracy in Washington or through state and local government—a position favored by the Reagan administration?

Neither approach, however, comes to grips with the realities of helping the poor. Bureaucratic solutions from any level of government are *intrinsically* incapable of solving the problems of the underclass. Most often those who design the solutions are members of the academic elite or the professional service bureaucracy. The programs they produce are "parachuted" into poor neighborhoods where they are administered by a professional staff of outsiders who have little in common with those they serve.

In addition, the bureaucratic agencies involved attempt to deliver services directly to individuals, although most lower-income people seldom feel comfortable dealing directly with these structures. In times of crisis, and when in need, the people usually turn to local churches, ethnic subgroups, family members, and other voluntary associations for assistance in negotiating with the larger institutions of society. These local institutions, which in sociological language are called mediating structures, often solve problems which have defied the best attempts of the service industry.

Traditional human service approaches have not only failed the poor, but have often exacerbated the very problems they set out to solve. Consider, for example, public policies and practices that affect children under the control of the public child welfare and juvenile justice systems. Although children between the ages of fifteen and twenty-one years make up only 9 percent of this country's population, half the number of people arrested for crimes fall within this age group. Yet many of the children who commit crimes have been raised in the child welfare system that sometimes seems to be a government funded incubator of youthful offenders.

Foster Care and Adoption

Some children come into the foster care system as a result of abuse or neglect by their parents, who are compelled to surrender custody by court decree. Others are voluntarily committed to the child welfare system by parents who are ill, incapacitated, or experience personal problems that render them incapable of adequately caring for their children. In either case, the responsibility for these children rests with public authorities who place the children in foster care for what is supposed to be a temporary period until the child can be returned to his natural home. If that is impossible, the authorities are responsible for finding an adoptive home. Each year federal, state, and local governments spend over $2 billion for the care of these children. Unfortunately, foster care too often becomes a permanent way of life for many of them, not the temporary haven it is supposed to be. Once public care begins, adoption is inadvertently discouraged. A body of administrative regulations has grown up around child placement procedures that over the years have become mistaken for immutable principles or "standards." In addition, more money is made available to agencies to hold on to children than to place them in permanent homes. As a result, children are routinely collected in agency care, remaining there for most or all of their childhood years, deprived of emotional security and reciprocity until predictable personality dislocations set in.

It is generally accepted that the state is the worst parent for a child, and that prolonged institutionalization injures and disorganizes normal psycho-social development. Official policy, therefore, is to move children quickly out of containing institutions, out of group homes and foster care into permanent homes. Yet, the evidence shows that child welfare agencies are not responding to this policy.

For example, the efforts of child care agencies are severely limited. Some children wait five to ten years for a home and the overwhelming majority spend their childhood moving through a series of foster homes and institutions.

Money for care of child wards[1] is often diverted. One agency accumulated a multi-million dollar stock portfolio while spending as little as $2.96 a day per child to feed and clothe their wards.[2] Since they received $24,000 a year for each child in care, the suspicion is unavoidable that adoption is less attractive to the child-keepers than is keeping the income the child brings in. In a typical recent year, four homes were given $6 million to place 2,000 children and placed only ten.[3]

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[1] Child wards are wards of the state; children in "out-of-home" care, not adopted, and not returned to parents.

Both children who need homes and families eager for children simply do not learn about each other. Inquiries are discouraged and an anti-family bias shapes decisions by the agency staff. Applicants for a child are too old, too young, too poor, too fat, single, the wrong religion or otherwise, in ways to numerous to count, rejectable.

Efforts to return children to their natural parents are also severely limited. Children are often placed in foster homes or institutions far from their parents' home. Visiting a child in "temporary" care is made difficult and often results in natural parents and children becoming estranged. Many parents are too poor to keep traveling to visit their children.

Meanwhile, the children experience hurt and rejection. The child ward is abandoned psychologically and often literally by the public systems that take over responsibility for him. There is no check on the quality of services to children and no cross-system monitor of practices.[4] Large care loads and voluminous paper work assure that workers have no time to get to know the children or to maintain contact with families. Workers are often unprepared to deal with family problems. In any case, even a well-run institution is not a family or a home.

Juvenile Justice System

The performance of the juvenile justice system reveals the same pattern of inertia, self-interest, and careless harm to young people who come under its authority. Diversion of youthful offenders from the juvenile justice system and deinstitutionalization of young offenders have been strongly urged to prevent the injury inherent in incarceration. Yet, even the father of the diversion policy, Edwin Lemert,[5] openly admits it has failed because, in fact, no one has been diverted. From the start, diversion quickly took on the carnival aspect of a bait and switch game. Advocates of a liberal policy toward juvenile offenders tried to raise money for alternatives to jail by citing statistics on the rising rate of serious youth crime. Government and private donors were baited to give, with horror stories about the worst index offenders, but when the money appeared, the serious offender was ruled out of any new programs. In a quiet switch behind scenes, programs were created to include a new population altogether.

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[2] Nicholas Pileggi, "Who'll Save the Children?" *New York*, December 18, 1978, pp. 53-56.

[3] *Ibid.*

[4] *See* "Audit Report on Foster Care Agencies Achievement of Permanent Homes for Children in Their Care," the City of New York, Office of the Comptroller, Harrison Goldin, Comptroller, 1977, and subsequent analyses by comptroller's office, 1978, 1981.

For example, in 1972 the state of Florida won an award from the National Council on Crime and Delinquency for having the most community based alternative beds for juvenile delinquents.[6] But in the same year that 1,000 alternative beds were funded, the state training school population did not drop by one. No one was deinstitutionalized. All they did was grab 1,000 youths previously on probation at home and put them in half-way houses, spreading the control of the system at great public expense and, incidentally, in no way disturbing the people whose jobs rely on the continued use of secure lock-up for youth.

Mr. Lemert has called this common practice "net widening."[7] Definitions of cases and offenses are manipulated to protect funding and the jobs of staffers. Then, with money available for diversion, social workers begin to take in youths who would have been ignored previously, thus *decreasing* diversion. More offenders are classified as "detainable" after the program is set up than before, and fewer are released to parents. There is also an increase in arbitrary discretion exercised by police and probation people.[8] As a result of funding for diversion and jail alternatives, police power has extended now over youth and types of behavior not previously subject to control. Thus, more than one worthwhile objective has been defeated, but the greatest harm is to the children.

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[5] From, "Lemert Believes Diversion Has Backfired," *Criminal Justice Newsletter*, Vol. 12, No. 9, April 27, 1981, pp. 3-4.

[6] Jerome Miller, Director, National Center on Institutions and Alternatives, Washington, D.C., transcripts of American Enterprise Institute Conference on Mediating Structures and Public Policy, Washington, D.C., May 1981.

[7] *See* "Lemert Believes . . .," *op. cit.*

[8] *Ibid.*

Reordering Government's Responsibility

The failure of many government programs can be traced to the underlying premise that centrally designed programs could be "parachuted" into poor neighborhoods and implemented by community action agencies *created by government*. This approach has resulted in a dependency relationship that is regarded even by the poor themselves as unworkable and inherently undesirable.

America's most vital, dynamic resource in solving urban economic and social problems lies in people working at the grassroots level. The keys to revitalization of our cities are the removal of barriers that prevent people from becoming productive, self-reliant members of society and the creation of incentives to realize their fullest potential.

In poor neighborhoods throughout our nation there already exist formal and informal groups that hold neighborhoods together in time of crisis, working to improve a quality of life that has been adversely affected by internal and external forces. Addressing problems of child care, urban violence and youth crime, housing, economic inequities and community development, these groups are the very foundation of neighborhoods.

A key characteristic of such community groups is their entrepreneurial nature. With little capital, but a great deal of "sweat equity," they have successfully attacked social and economic problems that traditional programs have exacerbated. Yet their efforts have gone largely unrecognized. Given little financial support from either government or the private sector, their operations have been characterized by challenge, complication, and risk. At the same time, the recognition of these difficulties by other neighborhood residents has served to give community groups the respect lacked by superimposed institutional structures.[9] Let us look at a few examples.

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[9] Five years ago, the American Enterprise Institute began a major policy study of grassroots neighborhood organizations. The purpose of the research was to identify the potential role community groups have in addressing urban economic and social problems.

The project's policy model is a monograph entitled, *To Empower People: The Role of Mediating Structures in Public Policy* (American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., May 1981) written by Peter Berger and Richard J. Neuhaus. Its thesis is that mediating structures are essential to a vital democracy and should be utilized to realize social goals. It concludes that public policy should encourage mediating structures and remove unnecessary barriers to their development.

House of Umoja

Over the past years there has been a marked decline in the incidence of gang death and juvenile crime in Philadelphia. The people largely responsible for this change are members of the family of David and Falaka Fattah, the founders of the House of Umoja, a family home for youth gangs and street kids. Umoja grew out of the personal concern of one black mother, Sister Falaka Fattah, for her own son and for her neighbors' children who were in the gangs at the time Philadelphia was famous as the gang warfare capital of the world.

In 1974 the Fattah's sponsored a "No Gang Warfare" campaign at the height of the homicidal gang activity in Philadelphia. They held a "gang conference," something unprecedented in the history of gangs anywhere. The result was peace pacts among the gangs and the creation of a United Nations-type of inter-gang council to resolve problems of the streets by talking, not fighting. Gang-related deaths began to drop dramatically from over thirty-two a year before the conference, to less than one a year in recent years.[10]

Sister Fattah in the House of Umoja has made a family out of the roughest of the rough, those kids regarded by professionals as so violent and dangerous they are unfit for anything but the lock-up. The only commitment the family made to the young people was to help them stay alive and to keep them out of jail. Since the gang structure had provided security, acceptance, and defined expectations to the youth, the Fattahs substituted the extended family concept for the gang, and positive activities for crime and violence.

Even professionals now acknowledge that the dramatic drop in youth homicides and gang violence in West Philadelphia is due to the House of Umoja program. As a measure of community confidence in Umoja, the juvenile courts now send their worst cases on to Umoja for care. Evidence of the effectiveness of this care can be seen in Umoja's recidivism rate. The Philadelphia Psychiatric Center at one time conducted a survey of re-arrest rates at three conventional juvenile jails and at the House of Umoja. They recorded a re-arrest rate of up to 87 percent for juveniles who had been in conventional care, but only a 3 percent rate for Umoja kids.[11]

The effectiveness of Umoja's work with youths "at risk" in the high crime areas of Philadelphia has been reported and praised in newspapers across the country. It has also been the topic of professional studies. Sociologist Frank Zimmring, at the time the Director of the Center for Studies in Criminal Justice, reported in 1979 a positive increase in murders associated with gang warfare nationwide, *except* in Philadelphia and New York. In New York the rate was steady, but in Philadelphia alone the rate was *decreasing*.[12] Other studies confirm the fact and attribute the change to Umoja.

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[10] Jack Anderson, syndicated column, January 7, 1979.

[11] *Encore American* and *World Wide News*, July 21, 1975.

Self-funded through most of its existence, Umoja still struggles along at a fraction of the cost of the typical professional agency. Yet, despite its shoestring operation, Umoja has survived and continues to attract other street youth looking for shelter. It has recently purchased twenty-one houses on Frazier Street and rehabilitated half for youth residences and office space. Most of the renovation of the interiors is done by youths at the House of Umoja.

In addition to crime prevention services, the House of Umoja activities include escort programs for the elderly, neighborhood patrols, and installing dead-bolt locks in the homes of the elderly and female-headed households. The Fattahs are now building a Security Institute that will house training programs for hundreds of youths in security, first aid, and life-saving techniques. The Institute will also seek major contracts for security services for shopping malls, warehouses, and factories.

Detroit's Homes for Black Children

Over half of the children in the nation's foster care are black. Many professional service providers mislead the public into thinking that the reason more than 300,000 black youngsters are in foster care system is because of fundamental weaknesses in the fabric of black family life in America. They argue that black families are not interested in adopting children, particularly if the youngsters are older than four years of age or suffer from a disability. They further contend that because of economic conditions, black families would be unwilling or unable to share what scarce resources they have with a child in need of a permanent home. Their contentions are groundless.

But, fortunately, alternative approaches to child care already exist and are succeeding. In Detroit over the past twelve years a model agency for child placement has been demonstrating that the real interests of children need not be sacrificed to bureaucratic ineptitude. Within its first year, Homes for Black Children placed 139 children. This exceeded the number placed by all thirteen of the other Detroit agencies combined. And over the past ten years, Homes for Black Children has placed over 700 children in adoptive homes.

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[12] *U.S. News & World Report*, August 20, 1979.

What makes Homes for Black Children different is its fundamental basis in the community it serves, rather than in professional traditions. Aggressive recruitment of prospects, sensitive handling of inquiries and mutual respect between case workers and prospective parents have made all the difference. Homes for Black Children draws on an informed grasp of the cultural realities of the minority groups served. The myth that black parents do not adopt has been shot down. The black foster child who used to be homeless for most, or all, of his childhood no longer has to wait.

To help them serve the children better, Sydney Duncan, Executive Director of Homes for Black Children, has drawn up a set of four principles that she finds account for the success of her agency.

First, Homes for Black Children sees its task, not as a job, but a "cause"—it is important to define *what* is to be done and *for whom* specifically. Success is to be measured in terms of product (the number of children placed), not process, i.e., man hours spent, tests given, or some other professional activity.

Second, staff is committed to the cause, rather than to any preconceptions regarding politics, life-styles, or "type" of adoptive home. Only the applicant's capacity to love and parent a child is regarded as relevant. Social workers usually think of themselves as accountable to fundgivers and voters, but Homes for Black Children is to be accountable first to the black children they serve. The staff refuses to be shackled by institutionalized procedures, doing "it" a certain way just because "it" has always been done that way.

Third, instead of focusing on statistical abstractions about need for black adoptions, Homes for Black Children transposed statistics into specific living children, placing the pictures and stories of these children on television and in the Detroit papers. Instead of presenting the community with the "burden" of hard-to-place or special-needs children, they showed the joy of Detroit black families who were achieving parental satisfaction. Instead of discussing racism or poverty, they presented a hundred specific children who could have homes where they would get love, food, and a place to live in peace.

Fourth, as the adoption needs change, Homes for Black Children changes its program to serve the new needs. After a year and a half of operation, so many black infants had been placed that there was a waiting list of families wishing to adopt. Homes for Black Children accordingly began to focus more on the placement of older children and "special" children. Other agencies are often more concerned with obtaining financial support for themselves than they are with orderly distribution of services.[13] In addition, Sydney Duncan has been personally very effective in persuading the courts to deal with legal aspects of adoption in a more timely fashion. When other agencies in Detroit realized what was happening, they altered their own practices to replicate this model in other communities.

The Church: A Model for Self-Help

Recent studies have confirmed that the survival of urban neighborhoods is closely tied in with the vitality of its churches.[14] For example, the Reverend Johnny R. Youngblood of St. Paul's Community Baptist Church in a low-income Brooklyn area is one of many who are successfully using the church to leverage positive changes in distressed neighborhoods.

"We had our back to the wall," said one deacon, recalling the depths to which the church had fallen, "so we just turned him loose, and see what happened."[15] A lot happened. Today the church has 1,200 members, more than half of whom tithe. Two years ago it moved into a spacious former synagogue in East New York. Under Mr. Youngblood's leadership, St. Paul's has plans for ambitious social projects, including a private junior high school, a meeting place for tenant groups, and a center for the elderly. Like many black churches, it is feeling a new sense of urgency, spurred by fears that the Reagan administration's cuts in social programs will bring new hardship and scarcity into their neighborhood. But their new urgency has also helped to bring the traditional role of black churches into sharp focus.

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[13] *The New York Times*, January 14, 1972.

[14] Roper Organization Report, "Private Initiatives and Public Values," The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research, survey report to American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., November 14-21, 1981.
EVAXX Incorporated report, "Grassroots Black Omnibus Poll," survey report to the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, D.C., August 1981.

[15] *The New York Times*, "In Poverty A Church Is Thriving," September 5, 1981.

Mr. Youngblood places great emphasis on education as a chief means to combat poverty. He forsees the school as closely allied to the church in helping the community to survive. The school is a place where Christian values can permeate education, linking manners and discipline to learning. St. Paul's is renovating a dilapidated building as its own junior high school. In addition, the church has set up a scholarship fund upon which a growing number of members are calling to help finance a college education. At the beginning of each new school semester, Mr. Youngblood takes time during services to underscore the benefits of schooling. Report cards are read aloud in church and praise and recognition of achievement distributed. St. Paul's Baptist Church now spends $25,000 per month in social services in its low-income Brooklyn neighborhood, and is the driving force behind a new local effectiveness in neighborhood collective action.

La Playa de Ponce, Puerto Rico

La Playa was long considered a place too dangerous to walk through and was generally avoided by outsiders. Rates of juvenile delinquency and crime ran twice as high as those of Ponce itself. The district was written off as too problem-ridden for effective programs of social reconstruction. Today, however, there has been a dramatic reduction in youth crime and delinquency and a burst of economic activity as a result of the work of Sister Ferre of the Order of Missionary Servants of the Holy Trinity.

The Dispensario San Antonio, Inc., is a corporate name for the original program founded in 1948 to provide health care, which is the most critical need of neighborhood residents. Over the years, it broadened its program activities and has evolved into a multipurpose, decentralized organization with programs in delinquency prevention, alternative education, and community health and development. A noted criminologist, Charles Silberman, after an intensive five-year study of American juvenile justice, praised the La Playa approach to youth problems as the best rehabilitation program he has seen anywhere in our system.[16]

La Playa project has developed an interesting concept for alter-

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16. Charles E. Silberman, *Criminal Violence, Criminal Justice*, (New York: Random House, 1980) pp. 589–605.

native and vocational education which it calls the Vocational Enterprise Project. The vocational enterprise projects are broken down into part-time, four-hour shifts so that as many participants as possible can benefit from the education and vocational training. One such project is the silk screen greeting card enterprise. During the first year of the enterprise, 6,000 cards were produced in three months, using four people on a part-time basis. In 1980, they improved their production methods with eight full-time people and produced 24,000 cards. In 1981 they produced 50,000 cards.

La Playa's agriculture project grows coffee plant seedlings. Despite the fact that experts advised the La Playa project that coffee could not be grown in the Ponce area, the group managed under contract with the Agriculture Department of Puerto Rico to produce coffee plants for sale to coffee growers in the interior. The La Playa project also generates revenue from a small pottery enterprise which provides youth employment and training. A new project, just begun, is a book binding company. Although this project is still technically in a vocational training stage, the rudimentary equipment is in place and residents are being trained in book binding techniques.

Jeff-Vander-Lou

In St. Louis a community organization called Jeff-Vander-Lou began as an effort to combat the dislocation and costs to the neighborhood associated with urban redevelopment. The community set out to realize its own alternative housing plans in 1966. Under the leadership of a clergyman, a retired school teacher and a local shop owner, Jeff-Vander-Lou incorporated as a non-profit organization, learned how to attract financing from banks and lending institutions and began to attack the whole roster of problems in their dilapidated area. In the course of its development, Jeff-Vander-Lou has become both an employer of its own local unemployed and a resource counselor to the surrounding business community.

By now, Jeff-Vander-Lou has constructed and rehabilitated over 800 housing units, more than $23 million worth. Besides completing the rehabilitation of a slum, the organization has expanded to deal with both youth crime and with other business development in the area. Their efforts brought in the Brown Shoe Company that employs 435 local people in the community. Through a grant from Monsanto, the organization has built a shopping mall into a potential capital resource with fixed capital outlay of $300 to $550 million in assets. The money from leases will return to the community for the continuation and expansion of capital-producing programs.

These efforts have reduced local crime to the point that the area is now insurable. Day-care centers, an emergency medical center, and a sophisticated communications system have been established. Other plans are being developed to meet specific community needs as they arise. Jeff-Vander-Lou is one of the most advanced of the hundreds of thousands of local self-help activities expressing themselves through a community mediating structure.

Barriers to Self-Help

The irony of these programs conceived and run by community people, is that they operate outside the mainstream and are either unknown or rejected by professional people responsible for developing programs for the poor. Often occupational regulations are barriers that mediating structures face as they attempt to reach their goal of self-reliance. Most regulatory policies are established with the intention of "weeding out the quacks" and improving the quality of services delivered. Most regulations, of course, have done little of either. Instead, they have increased costs, created markets for professional educators and severely limited the capacity of poor and minority communities to use their own members as paid workers. Many of the people participating on state regulatory decision-making bodies are professionals themselves and often act in protection of their guild.

For example, in Phillipsburg, Kansas, for twenty-three years the Borum Gentle Care Home had provided shelter, food, and care for thirteen elderly people too infirm to care for themselves—yet not so helpless that they needed a nursing home. The home was located in their own neighborhood, in easy walking distance of friends and stores, and operated without government aid. The neighbors often aided it in times of stress. When the $305 monthly charge was no longer sufficient to cover the rising cost of fuel and food, six of the thirteen residents were unable to meet the increased cost. The remaining seven received basic public assistance, plus a $4.19-a-day housing supplement.

But with the $4.19 housing allowance came a list of both state and federally mandated regulations: the administrator must have a bachelor's degree; the residents' every activity must be monitored and recorded daily; intake forms must be filled out and so on. The regulations proposed would not, in fact, improve the well-being of old people, even if they were affordable. If the Home is forced to close—and the list of requirements makes this a possibility—its residents will be compelled to go to a more expensive nursing home, far from their families and friends, where they would be cared for at far greater public expense and in excess of their needs.

Building codes, zoning, and institutional certification provide other examples of barriers to self-help. At a recent Public Policy Week conference in Washington, D.C., Thomas Dewar, a noted policy expert, cited some of the adverse effects public policy had on urban neighborhood enterprise:

> Building codes and zoning often add more costs onto neighborhood enterprises than any other factor. Developed primarily for new structures, they do no easily accommodate adaptation of existing structures to new uses. Homebased enterprises, cottage industries, child care services, and community alternatives to the institutionalization of young, old, and unusual people frequently run up against significant and costly requirements. They never seem to fit.
>
> Furthermore, each agency has its own philosophy, staff, and style. So instead of dealing with all the requirements at once, in a coordinated fashion, they get strung out by a parade of inspectors and prescriptions. This often leads to frustration, anger, and fatigue—and in a distressing number of cases leads groups to "give up."
>
> Community groups are often overwhelmed with the paper work and changing guidelines that result from these kinds of regulations. It saps energy and resources away from other work, and deflates the enthusiasm so vital to these efforts.[17]

Too often the creativity and effectiveness of indigenous neighborhood efforts are ignored by professionals and policy-makers because they fail to understand or refuse to accept phenomena outside of their own theoretical beliefs or because these programs require skills they do not possess.

Professionals who dominate the policy-making apparatus have a seller's market in that professionals themselves decide when, to whom, and how to serve. The result too often is the paradox of careless care, leading many of the poor to conclude that they must

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17. Thomas Dewar, "Barriers to Self-Development," unpublished paper presented at an American Enterprise Institute conference, December 1981.

be saved from their champions. Professional control over the means of social help should not become an ideology. There is an effective alternative in the mediating structures approach.

These are some of the facts we should keep in mind as policy toward human service delivery and economic development is debated. First, to empower a class of trained specialists as social helpers is also to generate a class of client dependents whose so-called deficiencies the helpers themselves define as requiring help. In this system, clients and helpers remain forever unequals and outsiders to each other. In turn, help that presupposes a deficient client undermines the self-respect and positive initiatives of the client and generally exacerbates his problems.

Professionally conceived and publicly funded social help also generates a helper industry that, unlike a business, is not supported by the buyers of its product. Accordingly, having no particular accountability to its clients, it operates a seller's market. This means that difficult cases and people can be rejected as falling outside the scope of the service, and clients served can be neglected at best and positively injured at worst. Since professionals also control the criteria of professional success and the definitions of its categories of clients and their needs, professional services can survive any malfeasance and continue in business, unlike a friendship, a family, or even a true market enterprise. Professionals themselves determine whether they have succeeded or failed and, if the latter, what the remedy should be.

Thus the self-perpetuating service industry perversely extends the very problems it purports to solve. The presence of public money for service, where service delivery is through an impersonal agency, provides an incentive to *keep* people in need, and a disincentive to solve social problems and conditions that generate clients. Service workers can be found actively extending their own control through manipulating treatment and the categories of the treated at the expense of those exposed to their help. In effect, public funds underwrite an industry that benefits staffers at the expense of their clients, and "the helping hand strikes again."

In contrast, the sensitivity and effectiveness of the mediating structures is being demonstrated daily in our urban communities. The low cost alone of such services warrants our consideration and support of them.

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Policy Review

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